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# THE CULT OF WEAKNESS

BY  
HENRY CABOT LODGE, JR.



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TO  
MY MOTHER



## PREFACE

ONE familiar result of the depression has been the collapse of idols and ideas along with the contraction in material values. Financiers and statesmen have seen their prestige dwindle away, and what once seemed like unchangeable rules for keeping everyone rich are now spurned and ridiculed. This collection of journalistic essays attempts first to establish that the philosophy of peace preservation which prevailed during the bull market days is also due for the discard, and that, whether or not we adopt another system, the time is ripe for a little introspection. It must be clear to all who stop to think about it or to those who, for example, have watched the latest Geneva conference, that, just as the creeds of the twenties failed to bring permanent wealth, so have they failed to ensure lasting peace.

But, although this book starts with an analysis of the peace issue, this question is used as merely one symptom — though a rather revealing one — of our attitude toward other great public questions. Indeed, the

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degree of success of the current peace effort and its causes are not, for example, unlike those of another experiment 'noble in motive.' The state of mind which these and other national problems typify is set forth in the main body of the book. If these pages do not fulfill the stock ambition of every political writer to provide a new philosophy of public conduct for his fellow men, they will, it is hoped, have a bearing on our politics which some readers will find suggestive.

In order not to burden the text, specific references to all the sources used have not been included. I have attempted throughout to back opinion with fact and shall gladly communicate the facts to those who are interested. But, in spite of these efforts, there are places where comment is, so to speak, uttered out of the blue. This is due to an inescapable condition facing those who wish to deal with current problems: that many of the necessary facts only become available after the pressing need for them has passed.

These rather informal essays will be justly criticized on the ground that they assume too much and that they dispose summarily of

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great subjects which in themselves could fill volumes. It will be said rightly that the author has a bias. But it is hoped that the bias is clearly stated to the reader instead of being insinuated and suggested to him, and that, whenever the views of a certain school of thought are used, they are correctly reported. Perhaps, too, objection will be aroused by the tendency to mix utopianism with practical considerations — for which, by the way, no apology whatever is offered. Certainly some of our problems would be nearer solution if the gap between thinkers and doers were narrowed.

It would take many pages to list the persons who have at one time or another aided in the preparation of this book. Perhaps they will accept this blanket acknowledgment of their help and will realize that these thanks, even though stated in such an all-embracing form, are none the less sincere. Finally, it should be set down that the views expressed here are personal and in no way involve anyone with whom the author is or was connected.

H. C. L., JR.

BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS





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# **I**

## **The Mirror of War and Peace**



# I

## THE MIRROR OF WAR AND PEACE

WITH the United States in its present state of economic dislocation and moral uncertainty, any attempt to appraise the American attitude toward public questions becomes more difficult than ever. This attitude is at all times a vague thing which, if it is to be understood at all, must be seen through a certain lens. In bad times there are so many dire symptoms to which criticism can be pointed that it becomes imperative to single out one great issue, treat it as a sample, and from it reach conclusions about our public opinion as a whole.

In the following pages the attempt is made to appraise the American spirit in terms of the great standing issue of war and peace. This is not only a subject of all-embracing importance in itself; it is also an almost ideal yardstick wherewith to assess the workings of public opinion. For this issue, in the emotion which it engenders, in the lack of moderation which marks its discussion, and

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in the widespread and often unavoidable ignorance in which it is debated need yield the palm to no other great topic of controversy. Because it is an issue in which active public interest is intermittent rather than steady, it gives the minority groups, which are active in every department of politics, unexcelled opportunities for exerting their influence.

The arguments and objectives of the contending peace groups, which are discussed in this first chapter, may therefore be useful even to those whose interest in peace is secondary, but who are interested in seeing how both sides can take little portions of great arguments and whip them up into grandiose 'moral' causes. The methods which they have achieved will, it is hoped, make it a little easier to see and interpret the broader canvas on which other national problems are depicted. Thus, as it is developed in succeeding chapters, will the war and peace issue stand before us in its proper context — as the symptom of an affliction which in varying degrees touches every matter of public concern.

## I

As is the case in many other topics of public controversy, the division in the war and peace debate cannot be stated in the neat but theoretical terms of those who want war and those who desire peace. There may be a few who favor war because they would profit materially thereby or because of some pet historical theory, but we have no 'war at any price' faction. There is, on the other hand, a group which, while small numerically, makes 'peace at any price' its watchword, and which is so active that one would like to know more about its motives. These are manifestly not to be explained on the simple ground of a hatred of human suffering and horror, since there are many other conditions and agencies which cause as much suffering and horror as war. Nor is it to be accounted for on religious grounds, since non-resistance to evil is held to be a sin by so many theologians. Perhaps the most convincing explanation, which, here again, lies at the bottom of other American creeds, is the idea that extreme pacifism is a symptom of the belief that anything that should be done can be



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done. Classic examples of this belief are the assumptions that Americans can by legal devices be stopped from drinking, that Malays in the Philippines can successfully administer an Anglo-Saxon constitution, that prosperity can be achieved without work — and that the human race by an elaborate series of written devices can be stopped from ever fighting again. It is quite true that no one of these examples can be described as startling vindications of the belief that nothing is impossible. But the belief has been vindicated often enough to be not yet discredited. For it was this same spirit which spanned the continent and settled the wilderness and it is also the spirit which has so far, with the single exception of the War of 1812, achieved the astonishing paradox of victory without preparedness.

It is also true that in the empire-building days it overcame seemingly impossible material obstacles for which there was no precedent in history. But, although the obstacles are gone, the energy which they inspired still endures and expends itself today on other problems which are old and for which the precedents are many. It may well be asked

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whether these problems would not yield more easily to reflection and lightness of hand than to the evangelistic hammer blows which are now given them by a pioneer spirit which knows not how to die.

The issue today, however, is not between those who desire peace and those who wish war. Instead, the fight is on between two main groups who desire peace, but differ on the best method of promoting it. One side thus favors reduction of the army and navy as rapidly as possible regardless of the establishments of foreign powers. It advocates American membership in the League of Nations and in its Court, and looks with a kindly eye on schemes to compel the United States to state its preference in the event of another European war. Not being fanatics, those who take this view will not, for example, take an oath that in case of war they will not support their country; they will not, when the men of the fleet are in port, do what they can to shake their morale; and they will not favor American membership in a pact which guarantees the territorial security of any special section of Europe.

The other side desires a navy up to the

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treaty standard and an army up to the figure authorized by our first National Defense Act. Those who feel this way may be said to be opposed to any involvements abroad which bind our future conduct. Not favoring a navy beyond the treaty figure, they are not 'Big Navy' men. Being agreeable to American participation in foreign councils where such participation will not endanger their country, they can scarcely be called 'isolationists.'

Being practical men, both sides recognize the fact that involvement of the United States in the so-called 'peace machinery' is a more difficult matter than the achievement of disarmament, for adherence to this machinery is a positive act requiring a new statement of policy, whereas disarmament is a peculiarly convenient political implement enabling a politician to pay lip service to old policies while denying them the financial sinews wherewith to make them real. Both, being realistic and both having read the abjuring statements of the principal League advocates, will leave the League and its works in the background and take issue with each other on disarmament. It is, of course, true that

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neither of these classifications fits all cases. Senator Borah, for example, abhors the League, but is a consistent opponent of maintaining the army and navy. It was the late President Wilson who originated the League and urged construction of 'incomparably the greatest navy in the world.'<sup>1</sup> The possible combinations of opinion are infinite. But, with such exceptions in mind, our definitions roughly and somewhat idealistically represent the prevailing division.

What, if anything, have these opposing sides in common? Both agree that war is horrible and that peace should be preserved. They are equally unmoved by those who say that 'man is war' and that 'human nature doesn't change.' They hold that the preservation of peace is a conceivable — not to say a tangible — goal, which deserves first place on the list of public responsibilities. And both can finally agree that organized society, as represented by its governments, while saying much, has left the fundamentals of peace preservation untouched.

<sup>1</sup> In the *Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1932, Mr. Walter Millis gives this as the wording which was reported in the newspapers at the time, although several other versions are current.

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For there is virtually no argument as to what some of these fundamentals are. The struggle for foreign markets, the pressure of population, and the expansion of territory are all prime causes of that hostile feeling which needs only the psychological spark to flare up into war. Yet nowhere are governments even stating these things to be true — let alone contemplating any action to remove such causes of friction. Great Britain is not counselling its subjects to abstain from foreign trade and France is making no territory available to the crowded millions of Germany. Nor is the United States, needless to say, opening wide the doors to immigration. The defeated nations, on the other hand, faced with this patent and utter unwillingness to take basic steps, appear to be doing little toward resigning themselves to their present lot.

Up to this point the two factions can agree. Peace is so desirable, in their joint view, as to warrant extensive sacrifices, but the world is intent on getting peace on the cheap. Whatever is done, therefore, will only be a relatively insignificant tinkering with things which do not seem to matter much to

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the citizen's present prosperity. The army and navy, for example, which do not appear to touch our daily welfare closely, will come into prominence in the peace fight where that foreign trade, which means jobs for millions of Americans, will seldom be mentioned in connection with war and peace. The Navy Department will become a centre of controversy. The Commerce Department will be free to go ahead to promote American business at the expense and with the resentment of foreigners. As is only too true of other great public controversies, the heat of debate will rage around side issues and the nub of the question will be left not only untouched but also undiscussed.

Faced with such a complete unwillingness to deal with realities at home, the advocate of moderate pacifism lifts his gaze to the world as a whole, where he can see farther — and see less. He becomes a believer in world peace instead of peace primarily for the United States. His reading of history leads him to believe that modern war is always and inevitably a world problem. He sees the murders at Sarajevo and American entry into the last war and concludes that every other

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European war will again bring America in. The war must therefore be stopped in Europe. He notes the fact that the huge German military machine was a factor in bringing on the war and concludes that the American defense establishment will cause another conflict.

He therefore comes to believe that peace will be promoted and preserved if American armaments are reduced or not maintained and if the United States surrenders such freedom of action as it still retains in the field of foreign politics. His is a mind which makes him see the similarities between the United States and other nations instead of the differences. He considers his view the progressive, 'forward-looking' one, because, as he will tell you, he is not placing reliance on the 'time-worn and discredited' system of security by preparedness.

The believer in preparedness, on the other hand, after agreeing that nothing fundamental is being done to remove the war danger, seeks for a quarantine for his country against that danger. His eyes contemplate the world, but his feet stay in America. He, too, sees American entry into the World War

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— but concludes that it could have been avoided. He hopes a fire will not start in Europe, but he has no taste for wandering among the glowing coals and he believes that he can prevent its spreading to his shores. He also notes the size of the pre-war German military machine and its influence in precipitating hostilities, but he reads his own history and sees that his own country was never forced into war by the size of its army and navy, although it has had wars aplenty.

His is a mind which makes him see the unique differences between the United States and the other nations — and the differences to him seem sources of strength. He will therefore not look kindly on the disarmament of his own country alone, either by international conferences or by neglect of Congress, and he will oppose the entry of his own country into any compact which lessens its freedom of action. He regards the pacifist view as fatalistic, since it presumes that the outbreak of another war will inevitably involve the United States. He regards the school of peace by unpreparedness as old-fashioned and reactionary, since it was the method which the Wilson Administration used so



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unsuccessfully in its efforts to keep the United States out of the war. His own method, requiring a well-prepared United States, he regards as forward-looking and progressive, since it is a method which the United States never has tried before. He, too, he will tell you, is a pioneer on the pathway of peace.

### II

A rather revealing characteristic of the belief that armaments cause war is a sort of diffidence which is perhaps as typical of a certain kind of American mind as the belief in prohibition, although it is at the opposite end of the scale. This lack of intellectual assurance is most noticeable in the field of art, where it is so difficult for an American artist to win American acclaim until he has first been applauded in Europe. It is, of course, true that, where ideas connected with money or morals are concerned, there is — or was — no lack of assurance and no demand for foreign advice. But there are subjects where assurance yields to diffidence, and among these subjects is war.

So it is, for example, that the United States has been having an emotional post-war

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psychosis which is perhaps quite the equal in sound and fury of those which in Europe followed the Napoleonic and the World Wars. We seem to have talked about war's horrors as much as anybody else, yet our numerical losses in the World War were scarcely comparable to those which Europe suffered. Indeed, we lost about six times as many men in the Civil War when our population was less than one third of its present size. But having felt so keenly for Europe in the war years, we go on feeling for her after peace has come. A more specific example of this deference to foreign opinion and foreign experience is found in the attention which is paid to the views of foreign military and naval men. A foreign admiral says that battleships are a waste of money or a British naval writer expresses the view that eight-inch-gun cruisers are of doubtful value, and their opinions will be readily accepted by many Americans in spite of the fact that our own admirals and naval writers often believe the exact opposite.

This is especially noticeable where 'frightfulness' is concerned. Foreign generals not infrequently make statements, which are widely distributed here, and which broadcast

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the impression that airplanes and poison gas will dominate the next war and will make it even more horrible than the last one. Yet the degree of importance of planes and gas is a matter on which the experts themselves are widely divided. Moreover, the quiet assumption of frightfulness which is so often made about the next war seems to be at variance with historical experience. The Germans were the chief exponents of frightfulness in the last war. But every military advantage which it brought them was more than overbalanced by a growing unpopularity among those neutrals who eventually decided the issue. If the Germans had won the war, it would be reasonable to expect the next war to be even more frightful. Having lost, it is certainly logical to expect the reverse.

This stress on foreign experience is perhaps explained by another frequently encountered assumption — of a world so small that all the nations are in the same boat. Those who make this assumption do not even seem to wonder whether nationalism is kept at the same white heat in the United States as is the case in other countries, but believe that it is either the same or greater. It apparently

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never occurs to them to examine the nationalism of France, Germany, or Japan and to see whether the United States lays the same stress on it that is both officially and spontaneously laid in those countries. They would frighten Americans out of having a navy by pointing to horrible examples, regardless of whether or not the examples apply. So it is that when the War Department denies a publisher's request for gruesome pictures of war horrors, there are outcries against 'the gloved hand of militarism' striving to prolong the war spirit. There seems to be no attempt to inquire whether other governments in other nations are taking similar steps to inculcate fear in the hearts of their people.

The question of whether the War Department would be justified in planting this fear in America when other nations are not doing the same does not interest such persons because of their belief that if we were to set an example the other nations would follow suit. They cling to this belief in spite of the failure of foreign countries to follow our example in the reduction of armaments. Those, on the other hand, who favor sacrifices provided they are equal and mutual, believe that the Ger-

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man naval precedent may be cited only if American nationalism is the same as the nationalism of imperial Germany. Failing the proof of such a condition, they hold that it is wiser to assume that our patriotic spirit, which lacks so many of the European motives for intensity, is actually less vigorous. Thus both sides make assumptions, but neither side really tries to find the truth.

It may seem natural and inevitable to encounter these insoluble differences in the realm of historical theory. But the truth is just as far, if not farther, away when the debate is conducted on the basis of fact. One hears it said, for example, that more money is spent on national defense than was spent in 1913 or in any previous year and that the sum so expended is surpassed only by the expenditures of all the nations of the British Empire. Then there are those who admit the truth of this assertion, but do not for that reason assign all militarism to the United States. A sound basis of comparison, they hold, is not only between a nation's present and its past, but also between one nation and the other great powers of the earth. The 'bigness' of a 'big navy,' they contend, is

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relative. It must be big in relation to something else. A man is not called big by comparing him with his size as a child, but with other men. The navy is greater than it was in any pre-war year, but the human and material treasure is larger still. It is true that the defense establishment has grown, but other government departments have grown far more. We do spend more than in 1913, but we spend less than in 1921.

It may also be borne in mind that labor costs are higher here than in other countries and that politics, rather than efficiency, often controls American naval policy. Nor is this new. In the first fifteen years of this century, imperial Germany spent about thirty per cent less money on her navy than we did on ours and had a navy which was superior. Because naval shore stations are so often regarded as political gifts, we are in the startling position of having twenty-seven shore stations no one of which provides for the strategic requirements of a fleet in time of war. And these stations, in maintenance and civilian payroll, account for nearly half of the total annual appropriation for the navy.

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The misleading way in which money figures can be used by both sides is also revealed by the favorite and government-inspired contention that 'eighty per cent of the government dollar goes for war'<sup>1</sup> — a statement which does not include state and local expenditures in its concept of 'government' and which lumps into one grand total 'for war' the cost of the army and navy and the pensions and debts which past unpreparedness incurred. Looked at in another way, it appears that the cost of both services is less than six per cent of the total outlay on government in general, a figure which, in this view, is not unreasonable for insurance.

The truth seems to be that much of this elaborate structure of facts is beside the point. If we have an army and navy, it is not because we feel rich, but because we believe in the need of one. If we believe in it, the value of the navy is so great in guaranteeing our

<sup>1</sup> Usually the government statements on this topic are textually accurate. The above quotation, however, is the impression left in the minds of the many who only read such things hastily. According to the National Industrial Conference Board, the cost of government — federal, state, and local — in the United States is about \$12,500,000,000. The cost of the Army and Navy is about \$700,000,000.

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general security as to transcend bookkeeping considerations. If we do not have one, it is not because we are prevented from so doing by being poor, but because we have ceased to believe that it is of vital national interest that we should do so. A government which can spend a billion dollars on 'public works' can surely afford to include \$18,000,000 for naval building.

### III

Even if navies were cheap, it is asked, is it not absurd for the United States to demand a navy equal to Great Britain's, given the fact that our naval needs are not as great? We are not utterly dependent on outside food lines, so runs the argument, nor must we protect a large colonial empire.

It is, of course, true that where food is concerned the United States is not as dependent as Great Britain on the outside world. But, on the other hand, should it not be noted that civilizations can fall and mankind be brought to a considerable degree of misery without actual starvation? If we were denied the use of the sea, our present civilization could not go on, for a United States without



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either rubber or telephones, to mention only two items for which we depend on the ocean highways, would not be the United States as we know it. Moreover, our export trade may not directly affect as large a proportion of the American population as is similarly affected in Great Britain. But the actual number of persons dependent on it is estimated as being about the same, and surely ten million Americans are as much entitled to naval protection as ten million Britons.<sup>1</sup>

When we turn to colonial empires, it is perhaps enough to say that our flag, whether we like it or not, still flies over the Philippines

<sup>1</sup> The number of American citizens directly dependent on export trade was estimated by the Navy League, January 9, 1930, at over 12,000,000. The Navy League's American figure was based on the speech delivered in Boston by Mr. Herbert Hoover, October 15, 1928, in which he said that 'our total volume of exports translates itself into employment for 2,400,000 families, while its increase in the last seven years has interpreted itself into livelihood for 500,000 families more.'

In this connection the Navy League's analysis of trade routes may be cited. It shows that about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of American trade routes traverse oceans whereas about the same proportion of British trade routes follow coast lines and traverse inland seas containing friendly bases. In the event that naval protection for trade routes were needed, the requirements of the vessels assigned to such protection would have to be governed by these fundamental factors.

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and that we are at present unable, by official admission, to defend them. We have, in addition, the Panama Canal and our Caribbean interests which depend on it. Our colonial problem is not as great as that of the British Empire, which is so clearly painted in red upon the map and conveniently dotted with flags and government houses. But the new imperialism, of which we are so energetic an exponent, does not paint itself red and go in for palace guards. It preserves the appearance of national liberty in the country which is being exploited, but derives material advantages without the friction and loss of prestige which accompany formal territorial possession. We may disapprove of a standard of living which requires rubber and telephones. We may think poorly of the new imperialism which so energetically seeks foreign markets. We may wish to get rid of the Philippines. But should not these things be eliminated or reduced before we either reduce or eliminate the naval protection which they require? You cancel your fire insurance policy after the house has been sold and not before.

If money facts are beside the point and

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international comparison is inconclusive, says one faction, cannot the same be said of so-called 'expert opinion'? Even if the professionals are competent men, how can anyone possibly know the nature of a future war, and, lacking such knowledge, how can you be sure that you are not building a lot of ships, most of which will be of very slight use?

You cannot, of course, be absolutely sure. The last war, for example, was fought from the naval standpoint with virtually two types of ships, the submarine and its antidote, the destroyer. Due to her relatively landlocked situation, Germany could only fight under the seas and her opponents had to meet that attack. If we are stricken by the calamity of a future war, some other equally special factor may occur which will emphasize particular types. But no government can gamble all its naval strength on a guess as to that factor. It must maintain all types. The battleship, so highly prized at home and so criticized abroad, may be useless, but battleships can always do something. Other things being equal, the nation which has them is better off than the nation which has none.

Indeed, the same age-old problem faces the

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army. It must, in theory, be ready to fight in western Europe or at Shanghai, where the war would be relatively stationary and speedy flank attacks would probably be out of the question. In such a situation there must be trenches and heavy artillery; gasoline supplies and repair shops can be established to enable the mechanized forces to function. But the army must also be ready for a war on its own Mexican border, or in eastern Europe or Manchuria, where the expanse of territory forces a war of movement and little time in which to settle down. In such a case the army might not live in dug-outs and ride very far in machines, but would be steadily on the march, using animal transport and living off the country.

Admitting the inevitability of having a number of useless weapons, say the moderate pacifists, how can you justify further building when naval limitation, paradoxically enough, has made naval construction even more unreal? What is essentially a fluid and imponderable science has, by the treaties, been reduced to an artificial and arbitrary set of rules. Navies bear less relation to future fighting than ever. Why go on building when

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the chances of building properly have been made even more remote?

It is perfectly true that treaties have made extensive originality in naval building impossible, but the treaty navies are all the navies that there are, and it is with them that the early stages of another war — and maybe the deciding ones — will be fought. Later, all the eggs may be put into one basket. Nor should it ever be forgotten that fleets are composed not only of ships but also of men. So important is this factor that it would be almost worth while to build utterly useless ships, if only to create a personnel which know something of seamanship and discipline and to ensure the existence of a body of officers and civilians who could, in a war, carry on warship construction. Obsolete training is, of course, inferior to that which is up to date, but can it be doubted that obsolete training is better than none? After all, raw recruits in the World War were drilled with broomsticks when there were no rifles to be had.

### IV

When historical theory, money facts, international comparison, and expert opinion

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have all been used — and discarded — the argument shifts to mass psychology, where every man is his own expert and can produce his own theories and his own facts. If you have an army and navy, it is charged, it is because you intend to fight. If you intend to fight, you arouse fear in other nations who, in their turn, begin to arm against you. The vicious circle of an armaments race is thus started which will sooner or later lead to war. The ideal arrangement would be for the United States to do away with its armaments and place its faith in the 'peace machinery,' imperfect as it admittedly is. But even without our participation in this machinery, there is such danger in the mere existence of American armaments that they should be reduced as far and as fast as possible.

Clearly an unlimited race in which all the nations enthusiastically increase their armaments is very dangerous. But the defense advocate cannot see that such a principle applies to the United States. There is, for instance, no international limitation on armies, but the United States Army, far from taking part in any race, has been consistently reduced. Clearly none of the nations

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which possess large armies today do so because of fear of the American military force. Moreover, both the treaties and the neglect of Congress have made it hard to argue that the United States Navy inspires fear. Replacement of old ships is neglected and there is no longer even the pretense of building up to treaty terms.

Furthermore, it should be understood that navies, in the larger sense, do not exist primarily to fight — but to prevent a fight from starting. The navy should not be compared with the fire department waiting to rush out to extinguish a fire. It is more like a police force, the mere existence of which tends to prevent crime. In the last war the mere knowledge that the British fleet was riding at anchor kept the main body of the German fleet locked up in home ports. Throughout the centuries of British naval supremacy, there were many persons and nations who doubtless wanted to start a fight, but who were dissuaded from so doing by their knowledge of the 'fleet on being.' This knowledge kept the peace without a ship lifting anchor or a shot being fired.

But this, it is objected, is the strategy of the

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bully who, by sheer force, seeks to have his way. In reply the defense advocate says that if the nation possessing weapons has the nature of a bully, it will act like one. A pistol in the hands of a man of sense is a source of security. A person who, upon seeing a pistol, wishes to fire it, is a maniac — a characterization which the believer in preparedness refuses to apply wholesale to the people of his country. A pistol, moreover, seems to him a poor simile for the navy — rather should it be likened to a bolt which can be slipped into its hasp when unwelcome visitors seek to force the gate.

But where, it is asked, are these unwelcome visitors? Let us list the countries of the world. Would not war with any one of them be 'unthinkable'? Common though this question is in war and peace debates, it sometimes baffles the friend of preparedness. He had understood that the root cause of the existence of pacifism was the danger of war and had entered the discussion on the theory that one point on which he and the pacifist were agreed was on the need for promoting peace in a still warlike world. When he hears it inferred that there is no war risk, there ap-



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pears to be no need of talking at all. In such a happy event the pacifist's end has been attained.

It is, moreover, easy in time of peace to make a list of nations with any one of which war seems 'unthinkable.' For one thing, it is always highly difficult to name the probable enemy; for another, it would be both dangerous and improper to do so even if it were possible. Yet it is not even doubted that wars do sometimes tend to involve other powers. In the recent disturbance between Japan and China, for example, it was evident that there was a possibility of the United States being involved. No one, to be sure, could say just how or when this would be done. But neither would anyone affirm that it could not somehow happen. It probably seemed foolish in 1913 for any publicist to compare the size of the American and German armies. But this became a comparison of some moment.

The unwillingness to arm unless we know against whom we are arming seems a dire tendency to the preparedness advocate. When the likely adversary begins to loom in the distance, we find ourselves in the uncomfortable dilemma of not arming, in which

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case we run the risk of defeat, or of arming, in which case the potential adversary becomes so angry or so frightened that he attacks. Is it not better to arm when you do not know who your enemy is than to arm only when an issue exists between the United States and another power?

The resources of argument having been exhausted and neither side having been convinced, the pacifist faction, as practical men, seek to compromise. Let us, they say, admit that the war danger still exists and that international anarchy is still — and bids fair to be — the order of the day. If, therefore, you must have a navy, why need it be built up to the treaty figures? Why must we have modern ships? Are not our interests perfectly protected if we have an army and a navy which are sufficiently strong so that no foreign soldier shall ever set foot upon our soil? <sup>1</sup> If pacifists, recognizing the remoteness

<sup>1</sup> In giving this as the viewpoint of the leading pacifists, I cite Professor Charles A. Beard, who, in an article in *Harper's Magazine* for February, 1932, praised such a doctrine and said that the plain citizen would 'have cause for rejoicing if advocates of peace will accept it.' Professor Beard cited President Hoover, who said, in his Navy Day statement of October 27, 1931: 'The first necessity of our government is the maintenance of a navy so efficient and strong

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of a perfect world order, are willing to compromise, should not the friends of preparedness be willing to meet them?

But the object of the navy, their opponents retort, is to keep the United States from being drawn into war. We did not enter the last war because of the danger of foreign soldiers landing on our soil. Certainly one reason why we were drawn in was because our people could not resist the immense profits which neutral commerce with warring nations yielded. We were intent on expanding our foreign trade. To this desire was joined, in Colonel House's words, an impotence to protect it. Can one expect Americans to turn their backs on the huge profits which another European conflagration would yield? Must one not proceed on the assumption that they will again trade with the warring peoples as eagerly as they did in the past? And, if this is true, is it not clear that a mere coast defense establishment will be then, as it was in the last war, utterly inadequate to protect what Americans consider their rightful interests?

that, in conjunction with our army, no enemy may ever invade our country.' He reiterated this policy in his speech of acceptance, August 11, 1932.

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If this is the purpose of the navy, it is retorted, a fleet is required which is larger than that which the treaties permit. Why is it not openly advocated? The reason for not doing so is that the defense advocate, too, has compromised. Where one gave up his insistence on complete disarmament because of reality, the other compromised on his belief in a completely adequate navy because of Utopia. Indeed, the preparedness men will say, so widespread has been this compromise that there are scarcely any real 'Big Navy' men anywhere to be found. The treaty navy which one side advocates does no violence to the other's world ideal and may come within striking distance of American naval needs.

Although it is a debate which never ends, we may do well to close it on this note. Perhaps its most disturbing feature is the unwillingness to know ourselves which it discloses. For we are as a people determined on having our own way. The fact that more than one half of our national life has found us engaged in wars large or small seems to show that we get angry and belligerent if we are crossed. And in spite of the ease with which we get into a fight, we find it hard to have the

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weapons or the training which may save our skins once the fight has started — and which could scarcely make us fight more often. We are thus guilty of the inconsistency of being belligerent without being military. Perhaps this symptom, too, has a wider application, for are there not other issues in which we lack foresight — in which we are so fascinated by what we would like to be that we forget what we actually are?

## II

# The Peace Fight



## II

### THE PEACE FIGHT

#### I

It is a common saying in newspaper offices that at the end of the day, when the citizen has earned his living and amused himself, he then — and only then — allows his mind to dwell on political questions. Public matters thus receive only the dregs of his intellectual energy and are therefore viewed from an emotional basis, for feeling seems always to well up when the springs of reason are dry. Perhaps this explains George Washington's regret 'that Democratical States must always feel before they see,' and his conclusion that 'it is this which makes their governments slow.' Yet modern life is so fast that questions are — and must be — decided without many of the people having either seen or felt. Only when the decision has been made do the sights and sensations sometimes become unpleasantly real.

Moreover, in the long catalogue of public questions there are some subjects where the



appetite for uninteresting truths is more voracious than in others. Taxes, prohibition, or the tariff affect the citizen today, whereas the national defense or the conclusion of treaties seems only to affect him in the future. With questions of war and peace so low on the scale of the citizen's sustained interest, it is not surprising that they provide specially interested groups with exceptional opportunities for independent action. For such groups, thriving on apathy, can do their utmost when the public is asleep and do not, like the prohibition minorities, encounter alert and stubborn public resistance.

Reliable estimates of a three-to-one ratio of public sentiment in favor of maintaining a treaty navy can thus exist side by side with a Congress which takes virtually no steps toward building such a fleet, just as the majority of citizens oppose the granting of a bonus, but when the veterans' lobbies desire one, it is often freely given. Lately, and fortunately, there have been signs of active civic effort on the part of the usually indifferent majority voters, especially with regard to correcting veterans' legislation and to other matters designed to balance the budget.

When this occurs, our system begins to work well and Congress changes from a set of distracted groups into a responsive and confident body. But as a rule the power of the majority is diffused. And this sort of power counts for so little that the student of government is brought to the conclusion that any well-organized minority can get what it wants in Washington unless there is an equally well-organized minority in opposition. The few who care enough about an issue to maintain a continuous and laborious interest in it count for more than the many who merely get excited a few weeks before the blow is going to fall. It is a case of government, not for the people or for the very rich, but for the few who care the most.

Yet hand in hand with this lack of a clear and peremptory public will goes the tendency to place men in office many of whom do not lead and who were frequently elected because, with ears to the ground, they were listening to the people's voice — a voice which, in spite of its sovereignty, is very seldom heard. So it is that the elected officials are often in the uncomfortable position of having to bow to external forces on any mat-

ter like prohibition, in which public interest is broad and steady, and must also defer to minority pressure on matters where the public is not aroused. If they are to act as independent men, either they must look to questions which do not arouse the public and have not yet aroused the minorities, or they must attempt the far more difficult task of creating a public opinion favorable to their cause. The rare ability which is required for this second method is shown by the fact that since the League of Nations debate there has been no such whole-hearted and widespread public participation in government.

Minorities not only address themselves to those in office, but also to the mind of the people. They try, of course, to bring public opinion to a focus when a specific decision is to be made; but, realizing that each of us has a mental picture of public matters, they try to make that picture assume a pattern suited to their aims. If they succeed, each new event falls into its intended place in the citizen's brain. If, for instance, the mental picture which the word 'admiral' creates can be changed from something strong, able, romantic, and self-sacrificing into something

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parasitic, stodgy, doddering, and untrustworthy, everything naval experts say or do tends to be discounted. Such mental pictures are perhaps the foundations of public opinion. Where the issues of war and peace are concerned, they are, due to the lack of a steady popular conviction, about all the public opinion that we have.

## II

Although lacking formal organization, the operations of the minority who care deeply about the American policy toward the preservation of peace appear to have a certain system. At one end are the formulators of doctrine and at the other are the direct contacts with the people and the government, through whom the abstract doctrines are emitted in vulgar, striking, and practical form. Back of these influences, and actively at work, are those of family and school which in past years gave to today's public its fundamental point of departure. It was through these institutions that we came to accept the dogmas that we must defend the right as we see the right, but must always turn the other cheek; and that we have created a new and

better world order on this continent, but must live in terms of egalitarian brotherhood with other nations.

Strike these beliefs and you will produce a spark. The writers, the clergymen, the officials, and the professors know that only by keeping in touch with these beliefs will their utterances have force. If they bear this code in mind, their ammunition will be acceptable to the guns, standing already aimed at the target of the public mind. These guns are the books, the magazines, the movies, the radio, and the daily press. The editors and publishers are the cannoneers, many of whom are merely 'good soldiers' interested primarily in the efficient functioning of their weapon and the accuracy of its aim. Any ammunition, so long as it explodes, is good enough for them. But some go further and, having strong personal opinions on the merits of the fight, tend only to accept ammunition of a certain kind and aimed in a given direction.

If sole dependence for ammunition were placed on the eminent intellectuals, the fire would be intermittent, for they seem unable to supply fact and argument in a steady stream. Moreover, neither they nor the

cannoneers can carry the fight to close quarters after the bombardment has had its effect. To fill these needs, the professional minority groups have come into existence. Unlike the occasional contributors, they give all of their time to the battle. In this day of government for those who care the most, these propagandists care the most of all. Being on the job for years at a time, some of them have a knowledge of their subjects which is seldom surpassed either by rotating bureau chiefs or the constantly changing elected officials. At their best these special pleaders fill a useful place in the practice of government. With political parties so all-embracing, they provide one of the few places where those with definite opinions can repair. If they were to disappear, public interest in public principles, as distinct from political expediency, would certainly wane and public thought would be deprived of a very provocative stimulus.

It should also be remembered that, although there is a machinery of record for the stock exchange, for election returns,<sup>1</sup> or for births, deaths, marriages, and baseball

<sup>1</sup> *Public Opinion*, by Walter Lippmann, chapter xxiii.

games, there is no such machinery for equally important matters like unemployment, for example, or war and peace. If the finding of unemployment facts is beyond the power of government, it is clearly beyond the power of the press. Newspapers cannot engage in deep research; they are instead the connecting link between the public and the research experts. They will only dig deep when a question has become a burning issue. Indeed, if it loaded its pages with matter which it considered important but which bored its readers, a newspaper would cease to be read. The professional enthusiasts realize this and so do not wait for burning issues to arise. Instead, they constantly supply fact and rhetoric to the cannoneers, much of which is not used, but some of which is. Thus if the guns are supplied and the aim is true, to them must go some of the credit.

When the fight reaches the hand-to-hand stage, the professionals become even more prominent. They appear before committees of Congress, supply facts to sympathetic statesmen, arrange parades and public meetings, draft cables for well-known citizens to sign, and, standing face to face before the

citizen or his representatives, try to storm the citadel which the bombardment has sought to demolish. If their bombardment has been the only one and if they have fellow enthusiasts within the citadel, they may achieve victory. Otherwise, the occupants of the citadel, deafened by the tumult and not knowing where to turn, may stay where they are. The issue may then be lost, and the curious battle starts again, with both sides firing at the same target and occasionally shooting at each other.

There is finally that great event, apparently uncontrolled and unpredictable, which moves public opinion as nothing else can. Such an event was the explosion of the *Maine* in '98, or the sinking of the *Lusitania*, which crystallized opinion more than all the bombardments of publicity or the hand-to-hand fights of enthusiasts. Usually — and fortunately — such events are beyond human control, for there are enthusiasts who would not hesitate to create them if they could.

### III

The eminent intellectuals who are the general staff of the peace fight exemplify



the age-old contrast between thinkers and doers in its most striking — and perhaps its most tragic — form. These articulate intellectuals seem for the most part to be enlisted body and soul in the pacifist faith, as anyone who reads disarmament discussions in 'quality' magazines or sees the reports of sermons in the Monday newspapers will agree. If one tries to recall the number of articulate intellectuals who are on the side of preparedness or of the United States minding its own business in world affairs, one turns up a sporadic civilian speaker and a few admirals and generals, who are fitted neither by training, temperament, nor native ability for the work of the publicist. Organizations, like the Foreign Policy Association, which attempt bi-partisan discussions seem to have great difficulty in finding persons who will take this side of a debate.

This strange absence of nationalism in our articulate intelligentsia, which in other countries has such stout literary, learned, and clerical friends, is, I think, traceable to the condition of our politics. It is almost axiomatic that our most intellectual men are not attracted to politics and that even those who

find it an absorbing study shrink from entering the lists. Thus a class of politicians tends to be created who can neither think nor write about public questions in intellectual terms and a class of commentators tends to arise who are totally lacking in an intimate and personal knowledge of realities. The mass of written and spoken matter thus dwells continually on the desirable without thought to the practicable and action tends to take the opposite course. England has produced men, like the late Lord Balfour, to whom politics was not only a practical and zestful occupation, but a fascinating intellectual exercise. We have the zestful politician and the febrile intellectuals, but where are there combinations of the two?

Not only are those 'quality' magazines with an editorial policy friendly to pacifism, but those without a point of view seem to believe that articles setting forth American rights and risks in international affairs are not what their readers wish to see. Instead the sacrifices which America should make are to be stressed. Moreover, this 'sacrificial' school has the great advantage of having a sort of house organ in *Foreign Affairs*, which,

while it may not be widely read, exercises a certain influence on editors and others who have numerous direct contacts with opinion. The United States, to be sure, has foreign interests, commercial, martial, and colonial, which would provide innumerable topics for a nationalist magazine of the same high editorial quality as *Foreign Affairs*. But no such magazine exists.

In the world of books, a rough test can be made by asking your bookseller for the latest works favoring American preparedness and American remoteness to foreign compacts. One is usually addressed to books of war-time vintage, whereas recent books favoring disarmament, American membership in the World Court and the League of Nations are plentiful. These special-purpose books may have an insignificant effect, but what of those more popular volumes by authors of reputation, which purport to be dispassionate, but which none the less grind the pacifist axe? So deservedly eminent an author as Professor Charles A. Beard, for example, in his monumental description of the Federal Government under the title 'The American Leviathan,' interpolates this paragraph among

pages of impartiality when discussing the reform organizations engaged in the peace fight:

Some of them lobby for bigger appropriations for the army and navy in the name of patriotism — the D.A.R., the Navy League, the Reserve Officers' Association, and the American Legion. Incidentally munition-makers and ship-builders rejoice in their activities. On the other side are several peace societies — which are usually branded with socialism, anarchy, and Bolshevism by their critics.

Clearly an impartial narrator, whether or not he agreed with Professor Beard's point of view, would have said that if munition-makers rejoiced in the activities of the 'patriotic' organizations, so, too, did the Japanese, planning to invade Manchuria, rejoice in the pacifist activities which kept American naval strength low. If 'peace' societies are branded with anarchy, the 'patriotic' ones are denounced as blood-drinkers and spendthrifts. Yet paragraphs like these tend to convince the reader by catching him off his guard.

If the organizations engaged in the peace fight are critically examined, there is revealed

a pacifist emphasis which corresponds to that obtaining in the field of speech and type. The fact that there are about one hundred and twenty organizations with headquarters in Washington who nominally favor preparedness should not blind one to the fact that the peace fight is not with many of them an object of prime concern. Most of them are deeply interested in internal membership problems. Others make a big point of immigration legislation or of communist activities. The American Legion, for example, is largely identified with veterans' relief. Certainly many of the Legion's recommendations for national defense have been ignored, where much of their work in behalf of veterans has borne fruit.

Some of these societies, like the D.A.R. or the Legion, publish magazines containing matter on national defense, but these things are no substitute for that factual data, produced by dint of laborious research which is the most effective weapon of all. There is not in Washington, for all of the one hundred and twenty-odd organizations, a single group which distributes factual data to press and public on American military policy. In this

respect naval policy, having the support of the Navy League, is better off. It is true that preparedness has on its side the War and Navy Department press bureaux with their branches in the corps areas and naval districts. But being directly under the thumb of political officials who are often more interested in the political *status quo* than in the national defense, they are unable to bring a controversial matter into the open. The information which they do give out is often in such a form as utterly to veil the general significance. Only a civilian organization, unencumbered by officials, can take these disjointed facts and from them draw a clear, if partisan, conclusion. Even if the political gag were removed, the national defense would scarce be better served, for these press bureaux lack an experienced personnel. Publicity is a craft requiring gifts rarely found in the profession of arms. When an officer turns up who has these gifts, he can only use them for a two or three year period and is replaced by a man who must learn from the beginning, if indeed he learns at all.

The pacifist organizations may not be so numerous and their memberships may not be

as large — although one remembers the statement that the Federal Council of Churches, which supports pacifist beliefs, represents thirty million church-goers. But what of the financial resources, as represented by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Bok Foundation, both of which are issuers of literature? Where is one to find a counterpart to so extreme a pacifist organization as the National Council for the Prevention of War, which by the admission of its executive secretary, spends 'more than five hundred dollars for every working day'? \*

\* From the report of Frederick J. Libby, executive secretary of the National Council<sup>1</sup> for Prevention of War, at annual meeting, Washington, D.C., October 20, 1931. A few more excerpts deserve quotation:

'Turning now to the National Council for Prevention of War, as it stands at the end of its first decade, it is fair to say that it is far stronger than it was even a year ago; for it has in the past twelve months remedied some of its chief weaknesses. It is now incorporated for one thing, and can receive bequests. Its privilege of exemption from taxation, a privilege which is extended to its contributors for the amount of their donations, has been renewed following its incorporation....

'In 1929 and in 1930 we sent out from national headquarters two million pieces of literature. This year the figure is nearly two million and a quarter. We have sent out 12,595 packages, or more than one thousand a month. The number in nineteen days of this month has been 1155....

'Former Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg has become

And in spite of earnest efforts to make them impartial, the Williamstown Institute of Politics and the Foreign Policy Association, the two principal forums for discussion of the peace question, tend chiefly to propagate ideas of the pacifist school.

If we tabulate the organizations which make important and factual contributions to public education in the peace fight, we find on the one hand the War and the Navy press bureaux and the Navy League, and on the other the following imposing list: Carnegie Endowment, Bok Foundation, World Peace Foundation, League of Nations Non-Partisan Association, Foreign Policy Association, Federal Council of Churches, and the National Council for the Prevention of War.

#### IV

Anyone would be guilty of false emphasis who said that, because the articulate intelligentsia, and a preponderance of books, quality magazines, and organizations have pacifist leanings, the victory in the peace fight

a member of the committee-in-charge of the Student Forum by Mr. Watkins' request and has written: "I am sure there is nothing more important in our educational activities than the work you are doing."



is going to pacifism. For one thing, the public has strong instincts of its own, and for another, no such bias is clearly indicated in the daily press, which is still, in spite of the news-reel and the radio, the greatest single agency for affecting public thought. The characters in the peace fight, moreover, measure their success by the extent to which they have influenced this greatest of all the guns pointed at the public mind. If their ammunition is accepted and they can point the gun, they feel that they have accomplished much.

They sometimes can point the gun, for the men managing newspapers are terribly busy. So many different items flash across the news desks in the course of an evening that it is hard to distinguish the true from the false. Some matter is likely to see the light of print which more deliberate examination would have excluded. The vigilance and knowledge which can cope with such high speed are rare gifts, made rarer in some newspapers because of the very natural fact that some managements are so largely interested in paying next month's paper bill that they have no time or energy left for contrasting the French and British naval policies or for working up a

model scheme for the solution of the prohibition problem. If editors, as is now the case, find news and reference matter favoring the pacifist side always at hand, some of them tend to use it without, for that reason, having a deep conviction either for or against pacifism.

The extent to which a newspaper's management is interested in public questions also influences the degree to which it acts for itself in fighting for causes for which it believes, or serves as a vehicle for the views of others. Every newspaper does both in varying degrees, but in some will be found editorial comment evidently written by men who know what they are about, whereas in others it is perfunctory. Some newspapers undertake their own news investigations; others wait for the news to drop into their laps. The influence exerted by the argument and exhortation of the editorial page may be secondary to the news columns, but editorial comment is effective when a new problem has arisen and most persons still have an open mind. In a city like New York, for example, where there is an influential public of publishers and other men of affairs who study

public questions intently, it is certainly not to be disregarded.

It is through suggestion and the subtle creation of mental pictures that the news columns wield their power. The inevitable bias of a headline, a quotation prominently displayed in a front page 'box,' the judicious selection of photographs, like the drip of water on the stone, wear away prejudices in one place and build them up elsewhere. These things are presented as fact — as indeed they usually are. But if a photograph of a certain man, taken when the sun made him squint, is a true likeness, it must also be admitted that it is only a partial one. To be sure, every editor is subject to the flow of the news, but the front page is only so big and only one news story can be given the most prominent place.

The national newspaper information in the peace fight comes for the most part from a relatively small group of metropolitan newspapers. Writing in 1914, Mr. John L. Given stated that out of more than 2300 dailies, 175 were printed in cities having more than 100,000 population, and citing Mr. Given, Mr. Walter Lippmann said that these 175 papers

'are the key papers which collect the news dealing with great events, and even the people who do not read any one of the 175 depend ultimately upon them for the news of the outer world. For they make up the great press associations which coöperate in the exchange of the news.' Today the total number of dailies have shrunk and the number published in cities of more than 100,000 population have increased, but the same general condition holds good.

In the peace fight, moreover, the number of effective newspapers is probably smaller still. Indeed, it would not be surprising to learn that where foreign questions are concerned less than a hundred newspapers set the tone for the country, for the journals having their own correspondents abroad and well-trained editorial men at home are the exception. So it is that segments of an editorial published in New York may appear in the editorials of many other newspapers, without either change or acknowledgment. Indeed, New York, as the headquarters for so many news and feature syndicates, for radio and newsreel concerns and for the two magazines which summarize the press —

*Time* and the *Literary Digest* — is in itself the source of many ideas which later obtain general acceptance.

Where do these more elaborate newspapers in their turn get their news of the peace fight? The special organizations and individuals, as we have seen, are ever ready to help, but governments are the principal source. For governments have publicity organizations which are as permanent and as lavish as those of any other private agency — if indeed they are not more so. If they are not always as keen, they are certainly more voluminous, taking full advantage of free postage, free printing, and ample secretarial help — factors which may seem prosaic, but which play a very large part in the conduct of private publicity. Governments can thus prepare their own sets of facts on short notice, can telephone or cable to this consul or that, can summon librarians and experts, and finally can turn out page upon page of neatly typewritten matter to be delivered by messenger to the awaiting press. It is no wonder that newspapermen have a saying that, right or wrong, the side of the government is always easy to get.

The other side — and there often is another side — is frequently not obtained at all. This does not refer to the views of opposition congressmen, for example, many of which are cheap and plentiful, but to those facts which would make another contention possible. Sometimes a correspondent, not content merely to wait for a department messenger, ferrets around for himself and tries to find someone as authoritative as the government who will give him the other side. But to do this he must often talk to persons in the government service who might either be court-martialled or dismissed if it were known that they had told the rest of the truth. The correspondent must not only know the subject well, but must be on intimate personal terms with those who do know — so intimate that he can telephone them in the dead of night. Because this kind of reporting requires imagination, industry, knowledge, and time, it is not often encountered. By sheer quantity, inertia, and availability the government's view is often made the public's view too. The presentation of the other side, if it is ever made, must then wait until the government's attitude has begun to give offense. The priceless first impression is lost.

## v

Examples of the results which the participants in the peace fight have achieved in a hurried and often inattentive press are not wanting. The several articles of the League of Nations covenant which call for the use of force have been soft-pedalled to a point where the newspaper stereotype of the League is that of a persuasive, but helpless, virgin. Those engaged in building up the Woodrow Wilson tradition have emphasized his pacific activities to a point where it is generally forgotten that he favored a navy which by present standards would be very large. In the period prior to the opening of the London Naval Conference, it was estimated that the number of times British food lines were mentioned in the news dispatches of the New York press surpassed more than threefold the mention given to the lines of American foreign trade. In the period prior to the opening of the World Disarmament Conference, there was a marked tendency to state the military strength of the powers in terms of money instead of men and guns. The money measure, of course, makes the American establish-

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ment look large and expensive and tends to create a willingness to make handsome concessions. If stated in terms of fighting strength, expectations of concessions on the part of others would have been elicited, and opposition to national defense measures would have been less intense.

The planting of these and many other little stereotypes is due to an inattention in journalistic circles which corresponds to the apathy of the public. Not only does this inattention favor the public adoption of axe-grinding ideas, but it also tends to blind us to that which is old and important. Lacking alertness, we cannot have knowledge. When the chief of naval operations, for example, announces that the American naval policy is that of having a 'nucleus' fleet to be expanded in case of war, thereby departing from the established policy of a navy ready for battle, there seems to be no one on hand to call attention to the change, be it in a spirit of praise or blame. When it becomes known that no American has received a cent from the American-Mexican Claims Commission, the fact scarcely receives any attention. When the dispatches tell of respectable Amer-



ican women being stoned in China or in the Philippines, there is not even a flurry of indignation. Yet the supposed plight of one Cuban girl was enough to arouse the whole country in the days before the Spanish War.

It is, therefore, no wonder that some who allow the intensity of the present to blur their perspective are beginning to ask themselves whether we are a nation or a state of mind. A large part of the organs of public opinion are consciously pacifist as are so many of the articulate intellectuals; lobbying and propagandizing is more efficiently conducted by pacifists than by their opponents; they seem to be more adequately financed; and the press, through inattention, thus often succumbs to their efforts. The people who once applauded a Roosevelt or a Leonard Wood applaud men of this type no longer. These are perhaps cheerful symptoms. Certain it is that they are mentioned neither in sorrow nor in anger. But should they not at least be recognized as indicating a change in public psychology — a change to which the deliberate forces of pacifism have in some degree contributed?

### III

## Rattling the Olive Branch



### III

#### RATTLING THE OLIVE BRANCH

##### I

WE HAVE heard the arguments of the peace fight and have seen the methods whereby Americans, in advertising parlance, are being made 'disarmament-conscious.' First among the tangible results of this campaign is the marked willingness to attend international conferences for limiting armaments. The United States has attended six 'preparatory' sessions which, as is too often true of conferences, seemed merely to make national rivalries more intense by bringing them out into the open. We have also taken part in four major parleys, two of which resulted in treaties which had a pronounced effect on the national defense.

At Washington in 1921 the United States, being the host, suffered a larger loss of actual tonnage (without a corresponding loss by any other power) which is greater than has ever been endured by any nation in time of peace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The tonnage loss is given in round numbers by the Navy League as follows: United States, 17 old ships, aggregating

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In spite of this sacrifice, limitation was achieved in only two of the five main classes of fighting ships, and one of these classes — the battleship — is authoritatively held to be of greater value to us than to any other power. We also agreed not to fortify our Far Eastern possessions on the understanding that the Japanese would remain in a ratio to the United States of six to ten where battleships were concerned.

The passage of time brought with it the realization that foreign powers were, in the words of President Coolidge's Armistice Day speech, quite willing to make 'agreements limiting that class of combat vessels in which we were superior, but refused limitation in the class in which they were superior.' When we became aware of this strange coldness to proposals limiting ships which the foreigner found useful, and when we saw brisk foreign building, which we did not in the least wish to emulate, it appeared that we had made a mistake in leaving three major classes of ships without any bounds at all.

265,000 tons, and 13 ships in construction, aggregating 550,000; United Kingdom, 24 old ships, aggregating 500,000.

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In 1927, therefore, President Coolidge called the Geneva Conference in the hope that the other powers would repay us for our sacrifices at Washington by consenting to limitation of cruisers, destroyers, and submarines, in which they were superior to us. This proved to be an unfounded hope. Instead of showing any willingness to reduce to our level, tonnage figures were suggested which were beyond anything that the United States wanted to build. Not unnaturally we were told that, if we wanted parity, we, as the richest nation, could easily afford to build up to it.

It seemed then as though the era of conferences might be over. Naval affairs from a foreign standpoint were pretty satisfactorily arranged. Great Britain and Japan were proportionately way out ahead in the three unlimited classes and there was not the slightest indication that the United States would attempt to build up to them. We might still want to confer, but it takes at least three to make a naval conference, and there was no cogent reason in the form of American naval building why such a parley should appear to be to the interest of the other great powers.

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But the worm turned. A bill authorizing the building of fifteen cruisers had been passed and a determination appeared to go still further and provide funds for their construction. Mr. Coolidge, now a rather disillusioned man, delivered his Armistice Day speech of 1928 and Ramsay MacDonald displaced the Conservative Government and became Prime Minister of England. The passage of the fifteen-cruiser bill showed that it was still worth while to hold limitation conferences, for it became clear that the United States still had — or would soon have — something to limit. The Coolidge address gave verbal confirmation of this fact — and of American irritation. And Mr. MacDonald's election put in office a man who was instinctively more friendly to naval limitation and whose foreign policy, being guided by Mr. Snowden away from France, was therefore out to capture American good-will. Furthermore, the England of Ramsay MacDonald, weighted still more heavily with doles and feeling the beginnings of a trade depression, was less willing to spend money on a navy.

These powerful causes brought limitation

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of all classes of ships at the London Conference of 1930 between the United States, Great Britain and Japan. Because France and Italy did not sign the treaty, it can become inoperative if either of them builds above a certain figure. In this event the dance will be on again. Moreover, the treaty only holds for five years. But these imperfections do not void the magnitude of the achievement at London. To be sure, the London treaty is not without its sacrifices for the United States. Great Britain, in spite of Mr. MacDonald's willingness to 'take parity heaped up and flowing over,' obtained a slight margin of superiority in tonnage, and Japan, as a result of this pact and of her own energetic building, does not stand in the relation of six to ten with regard to the United States. A great principle, however, was given substantial endorsement by the great nations.

### II

To the pacifist all of these accomplishments were welcome. Their chief defect in his view was that they did not go far enough — a defect which aroused some very real resent-



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ment, in view of the predictions made by optimistic administrations that real reduction would be obtained. It is still true that the only actual reduction of any material amount was at Washington when the United States scrapped such a huge number of her battle-ships.

Those in the opposing camp, on the other hand, were by no means of one mind on the merits of international naval limitation. One extremist group held that any kind of limitation is an evil. Believing that the United States can only be kept at peace by having a navy equal to the protection of her interests against all comers, they stressed the fact that when the war ended the United States, as the richest and least damaged of all the powers, could have built whatever navy she liked and, with the world at her feet, could have done whatever she wished. We could have followed the historic British example of building a navy superior to all of the navies of the world rolled into one. It is from this point, they say, that measurements should be made, and such measurements, they contend, reveal a generosity which is akin to foolishness. Holding this view, it is easy to

understand why they become purple with rage when some persons remark on how splendid it is of the British 'to give us parity.' The United States, they hold, is doing all the giving. But because we were more impressed by the pleas of other nations than we were with our own best interests, we allowed the opportunity of the immediate post-war years to slip by until foreign powers had outbuilt us to a point where they were actually 'consenting' to American requests.

To the moderate believer in preparedness there is something just as incurably romantic about this position as there is in the attitude of the pacifist. In the first place, naval races do cause international friction — a fact which is as true of an uneven race such as the one which was taking place between the United States and Great Britain as it was of the closer one which Great Britain had with Germany. On this ground alone international limitation is to be desired and naval protection should be required to conform. To be sure, the unequal treatment to which the United States has consented is to be deplored. Yet how can one join in the denunciation of foreign statesmen which these

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inequities have aroused when it is considered that they are solely the fault of our own officials who did not have at their backs the pressure of an informed public opinion? It seems hard to blame the foreigner for the fact that we consented to limitations on our ships if one believes that Congress has not the stomach to build even those ships which we are permitted to have. It is equally difficult to fume because we are denied the right to fortify the Philippines, if one is convinced that neither the administration nor Congress would fortify them even if they were allowed to do so. Limitation on any kind of a fair basis is thus not unwelcome to the moderate defense advocate because it is a sort of guarantee that peoples whose understanding of naval matters is greater than ours will not completely outbuild us.

If the 'Big Navy' extremists had taken these things to heart, they would have realized that no Congress or administration would rise to the unequalled opportunities which lay open to the United States just after the war. They would have seen a grim parallel between the pacifists who berated their government for not rising to its op-

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portunities in Wilsonian spheres, and the nationalists who were up in arms because their government was not sufficiently Nelsonian to maintain a navy.

### III

The specific measurement of the results achieved by pacifism is beset with difficulties which are clearly, if discouragingly, set forth by the six preparatory conferences on land disarmament which Europe has witnessed. At these gatherings the American delegate would hold that the way to compare armies was simply to state how many regular soldiers, guns, tanks, airplanes, and munitions there were in each country. But this did not suit other nations. You should, they said, include the number of men who are not in the army but who have had military training. You should allow for the fact that an industrial country can produce guns, tanks, and airplanes more easily than one which is chiefly agricultural. You should count the number of civilian pilots and the number of men who belong to rifle clubs. You should even allow for the fact that an agricultural country will more easily feed an

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army than one which must import its food. So far was this argument carried that it was even argued that a country which enjoyed good weather most of the time had a military advantage over a country where it rained a great deal, because the fair weather country has more opportunities for target practice, open order drill, and airplane maneuvers. Indeed, it was these considerations which led some nations with low labor costs and elaborate bookkeeping systems to favor the measurement of armies by money — a method which, as a preceding chapter has indicated, is not only misleading, but to the special disadvantage of the United States.

It is nevertheless helpful to make the international comparison, using the simple and straightforward method of the actual number of fighting men constantly under arms. Our regular army of 137,631 officers and men on this basis ranks eighth, being surpassed in the order of their size by Russia, France, Italy, Poland, Japan, Roumania, and the United Kingdom. Next in line after the United States is Czecho-Slovakia, with a standing force of about 131,000, and tenth on the list is 'disarmed' Germany with her

unvarying total of 100,000 fighting men and 4500 officers.

The size of the army must also be gauged by the standard which we deliberately set for ourselves in the National Defense Act of 1920, which formulated our present military policy. This law was drawn at a time when men's minds were deeply impressed with the folly of unpreparedness and when there was a determination not to be caught unprepared again. The opinions of military and industrial experts and of leaders in both politics and business went into the making of this act, giving it a distinction which few laws possess. This law fixed many standards for our land armaments, one of them being a regular army of 280,000 officers and men. It set figures for a munitions reserve and for the various classes of trained civilian soldiers without which a small regular force would not have been justified. Any measurement of the size of the army must take note of the fact that these provisions of the National Defense Act are not being observed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, 1931, p. 39: 'Under the existing congressional directive, our effort has been to maintain a reserve for a force of two field armies or 1,000,000 men. Through lack of sufficient appropriations we have

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In measuring the navy, it must first of all be realized that you are not measuring sea power. The ability to act effectively at sea requires outlying bases, a merchant fleet and a navy. A country may be great in many other ways. It may, like the United States, be far richer than Great Britain in natural resources. So, incidentally, is Bolivia. But these things do not automatically mean the possession of sea power any more than the existence of steel deposits means that a country is rich in automobiles. When, therefore, we speak of parity, we are speaking of fleet parity only and not of equality of sea power. Indeed, in naval bases and in merchant ships of naval capabilities the British outnumber us by about four to one. Consequently, the more the fleets are reduced the more the importance of the merchant fleet increases — and there have been no proposals to limit merchant fleets. When battleships, big-gun cruisers, and submarines — which are all especially fatal for an armed merchantmen — become the objects of British

fallen far below this level in certain essential items. This applies particularly to ammunition, which deteriorates after a number of years in storage.'

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diplomatic attack, it is not hard to see why.<sup>1</sup> Nor is it difficult to understand why such

<sup>1</sup> For the American viewpoint on battleships see 'Present Problems of Naval Reduction,' United States Naval Institute *Proceedings*, July, 1931, Commander T. C. Kinkaid, U.S.N.:

'The United States considers the battleship of particular importance for its own requirements; certain other powers possessing a strategically located chain of bases desire a large number of cruisers; others insist upon a large submarine tonnage. The present agitation to reduce the size and fighting strength of battleships is aimed at the one type of particular importance to the United States, and is a first step toward the abolition of that type, which is relatively less important to the other powers. A fair method of reduction would be a proportionate reduction of each type, not the elimination of one. After naval armaments have been stabilized by the definite limitation of all types for all powers, such a reduction will be in order when political considerations permit.

'The capital ship is the only type of ship that can take the sea and remain at sea for long periods under all conditions of service and weather. It is less dependent upon a well-placed chain of bases than any other type. It is the only type that can be constructed to withstand reasonably well the attack of modern weapons.

'With the advent of each new weapon, false prophets have predicted the death of the capital ship. Particularly was this true when the airplane became an important factor at sea. However, the development of aviation, far from proving the battleship to be obsolete, has emphasized the value of that type and given it added importance in the eyes of a navy. Formerly, the high speed of the cruiser made it secure against the attacks of other vessels. No ship that could defeat the cruiser could overtake it. But today, the speed of the airplane permits it to overtake any surface vessel, and



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also have to consider the possibility that aviation, the relatively unknown arm, will be either overwhelmingly important or comparatively insignificant in a future war. Lacking such knowledge, we do not know whether to give it greater or less value than the better known forces of land and sea.

By these tangible criteria of money and men, it is clear that neither side in the peace fight has won complete victory. The mere existence of an army and navy is proof that the pacifist who wants their total abolition has not yet won his fight. The fact that both services are well below accepted standards is a rebuff to his opponent. But neither expected complete success and both had agreed to compromise, one on a treaty navy and the other, as exemplified by Professor Beard, on a navy large enough to guarantee our soil against foreign invasion. In the light of these compromise goals, it becomes clear that the pacifists have the edge. By presidential admission the navy today is large enough to prevent foreign invasion. When it comes to the protection of the outlying springs of our economic vigor, it is inadequate.

### IV

In the field of paper commitments and official utterance, where the prizes are by no means as tangible, the believer in preparedness has fared a little better. Having inertia against him, his opponent has failed to achieve the entrance of the United States into the League of Nations, into any pact guaranteeing European security, or into any agreement requiring the United States to take sides in the event of a European war. In this field his greatest success has been with regard to the League's Court of Permanent International Justice, for which, with the assistance of many who are not pacifists, ratification by the Senate was secured. Because the reservations which the Senate attached were unpalatable to other nations, they were unwilling to have us join on such terms. With that often characteristic trait of finding other nations right, and the United States wrong, some persons have tried to create the impression that because we are not a member of the court we never expressed our willingness to become one. In spite of the facts, there are lecturers and even government spokesmen

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who paint the picture of a selfish, provincial United States unwilling even to give its support to a court of justice.

The Kellogg Peace Pact, whereby the nations agreed not to resort to war 'as an instrument of national policy,' aroused considerable pacifist support, although it was never strongly opposed except by a very few. Ratified on the understanding that it did not prevent wars of self-defense, it thereby gave the war of self-defense a sort of formal sanction which it had not previously enjoyed. It was not surprising to have the Japanese Government recently maintain that its marching columns in Manchuria and its expeditionary force at Shanghai were fighting in self-defense. They were thus, one supposes, wrapped in the protecting folds of the Kellogg Treaty.

In order, in Pooh-Bah's famous words, to 'lend verisimilitude to an otherwise unconvincing narrative,' the attempt was made to 'invoke' the Kellogg Pact. This was in the late summer of 1929 when one of the many disagreements between bands of Chinese and bands of Russians led to some fighting in Manchuria. The Secretary of State sent

notes to the governments of China and Russia reminding them of the pact and doing so just as the fighting was coming to a close. The Russians told the Secretary, in terms which were far from polite, to mind his own business. The net result appeared to be the incurring of Russian ill-will and the lifting of a relatively unimportant bandit scuffle to the level of importance of a real war. It was no wonder that some observers reflected at the time that the word 'war' was used merely in order to inflate the importance of the Kellogg Treaty. To raise the cry of 'peace, peace,' where there was no war seemed curiously like starting a war scare — not for preparedness, but for the sake of pacifism.

Various administrations have by executive actions also accentuated the general drift against maintaining the national defense. In 1924, President Coolidge abolished Mobilization Day — an occasion which without money cost provided an excellent opportunity for refreshing the minds of the citizen soldiers as to where they should go in case of an emergency. We still have Navy Day, but this, too, may not be with us much longer. In 1931, President Hoover's Administration

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agreed to a naval building holiday which, merely by forcing our naval construction to stand still, will increase the relative superiority of other powers.

There has also been a change in the type of delegate which the United States has been sending to international conferences, which in itself is a sign of the times. At the Washington Conference the United States was represented by Charles Evans Hughes, Henry Cabot Lodge, Oscar W. Underwood, and Elihu Root. At the Geneva Conference five years later the American delegation was of similar caliber in that it consisted of Hugh S. Gibson and Admiral Hilary P. Jones, a naval authority of whom the public should know far more. At London in 1930 the large American delegation, although it contained such men of ability as Charles Francis Adams, Joseph T. Robinson, Dwight W. Morrow, David A. Reed, and Hugh S. Gibson, did not include a single naval authority, in spite of the fact that professional naval men were sitting as full delegates in the delegations of other powers. Finally, at the Geneva Conference of 1932 the American delegation, although numbering among its

members so experienced a statesman as Claude A. Swanson, not only included no naval or military authorities (who were all brought along merely as advisers), but had in its membership as a full-fledged delegate so well known and unreserved a pacifist as Miss Mary Woolley. In contrast to the American group may be mentioned the fact that Lord Cecil, an outstanding British pacifist, did not represent Great Britain and that France was represented at the opening by the highly nationalist André Tardieu.

### V

Such policies are manifestly not to be explained either by traditional Republican doctrine, for the platform planks, for one thing, favor a treaty navy. Nor can they be laid to the binding force of historic American policy. A plausible explanation for such action is that it tends best to preserve the political *status quo*. It enables officials to save money on a matter which is not popular politically, in order to put into expansions which are to the direct advantage, and hence command the support, of considerable blocks of voters. A sufficiently vociferous preach-

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ment of disarmament, moreover, gives an appearance of action. It is also likely that officials have been impressed by the political power of organized pacifism, but the further likelihood must also be recognized that the personal beliefs of those in high office naturally sympathize with the view that expenditures for armament are 'unproductive' and that the mere expression of a pious hope will, by some mysterious alchemy, produce true international brotherhood among nations and races of wide dissimilarity.

This state of mind among certain leaders brings us to the last and perhaps the greatest accomplishment of American pacifism. Their influence on American disarmament and on other aspects of foreign policy has, as we have seen, been considerable without being always sharply defined. Broader than these things, however, is the fact that they have made of a self-reliant national policy something which is not quite intellectually respectable. Mr. Everett Dean Martin may say that 'today it is a disgrace to be called a pacifist in the United States,' but there are plenty of places where it is distinctly unfashionable to believe in preparedness. It is not surprising that

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some of our leaders are influenced by this accomplishment.

There is also the swing of the pendulum to be reckoned with. Due only in small part to the conscious efforts just described, we seem to be in the midst of a 'softie' era which is the exact reverse of that period just after the war when Attorney-General Palmer saw Bolsheviks under every bed and when even holders of the Congressional Medal were being stopped in the street by anxious householders to be asked whether they were 'one hundred per cent American.'

Those were days of absurd intolerance and violence. These may be the days of an equally preposterous submissiveness and a faith in weakness, *per se*, which is perhaps far more dangerous. Probably — such is the inevitability of reaction — we should have reached this stage without the aid of special groups. But that these minorities have intensified the state of mind and given it encouragement is hard to question. Even less doubtful is it that if the money and energy so expended had been used in opposite ways, the public attitude toward the preservation of peace would be a different one today.



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It is also noteworthy that the facilities for public education in the peace fight are few and inadequate when compared with those which exist in the discussion of purely internal questions. Whereas in one case we have access to informed views based on direct experience, we are in the peace fight dependent on statesmen who for the most part are content to follow; propagandists who have busily ground their own axes; and publicists, many of whom have either accepted propaganda or have failed to do their own thinking and research. The professional military men, some of whom have thought long and deeply about the question, are not usually fitted for this sort of public education, and certain prominent members of the clergy, who seem to discuss these matters even more than the professional students, have committed the tragic mistake of uttering current comment on devices for peace preservation instead of inculcating a true desire for peace. Manifestly, a clergyman's comment on the desirability of membership in the World Court, or his views on so moot a question as the degree of horror of future wars, are matters of slight importance. But he alone has it in his power

to instill a potent emotion which could vanquish all.

One may well be chary of placing blame, however, for the quest for peace is one which confuses even the clearest mind. Not only do different sides make differing assumptions, but they can agree on their assumptions and then deduce varying conclusions. A gifted historian, like Mr. James Truslow Adams, for example, may remark on the 'ruthlessness' of international relations and a few pages later condemns the United States for not plunging into them. So crystal-clear a journalist as Mr. Lippmann may let his intellectual devotion to a certain form of peace machinery carry him so far that he forgets peace and writes about the Japanese in Manchuria in a manner calculated to arouse that anger which leads to war.<sup>1</sup> Reason seems to fail even the ablest of them. At bottom the differences of opinion seem to be pathological and hence unarguable.

We must now ask ourselves as searchingly as possible whether or not the present apathetic attitude and lack of self-reliance are

<sup>1</sup> Article by Walter Lippmann, *New York Herald Tribune*, December 24, 1931, 'Christmas in Chinchow.'

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permanent. If they are, then all who have labored to make them so have achieved something very real. If the wells of strong national emotion have been dried up forever and a future foreign threat to the national well-being will arouse no more sentiment in the future than does the maintenance of the navy today, the pacifist groups will not only have achieved mightily, but their achievement will have been both consistent and correct. For would it not be wasteful indeed to maintain a navy for a people which did not have the stomach to use it?

It may be doubted whether the responsible leaders of pacifism would say that they had already wrought such achievements. For all their organization and for all their influence on the articulate elements of the country, it seems fair to guess that they have only gained the partial success which pacifism can always achieve in the United States between wars. They can, to be sure, look without fierce objection on the present public concept of the value of a navy and they can see with satisfaction that the vague popular desire for national self-reliance has been quite effectively discouraged. But would it not be rash

to assume that these partial successes have obliterated the people's capacity for anger in the face of what it regards as dangerous or unjust? Clearly, if resentment at real or fancied wrong recurs, the work of the pacifist will have made that resentment more dangerous and more wasteful than it would otherwise have been.

But neither side can feel much pride or satisfaction over the state of the peace fight when they remember that the fundamental causes of American war are untouched — that practical economics are never considered with peace promotion in mind. Moreover, this omission by itself would not account for the present hopeless condition. If we merely recognized the existence of the fundamental war causes, without necessarily doing anything about them, a clear knowledge of the war and peace issues would ensue which would tend to produce a clear and peremptory public sentiment.

The creation of such a sentiment, however, seems to be the very last thing which anyone desires. For how else can one explain that bustling activity over surface matters which not only does nothing to encourage such

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a sentiment, but, by boring and confusing the public, actually throttles it? Instead of thinking about peace as a condition which affects every concern of our lives, we get entangled in endless discussions on methods of measuring armies and navies and thicken the fog in which the peace question is veiled by filling the front page with opinions on the Kellogg Pact. Perhaps our leaders are forced by political and business necessity to draw these red herrings across the pathway and thus avoid even the mention of reality. But surely the energy which both sides display in the peace fight could do something to end this rattling of the olive branch,<sup>1</sup> which is so senseless and so full of peril.

<sup>1</sup> This phrase is not original with me. Heard in one of many discussions of disarmament, I cannot recall who uttered it and so am unfortunately unable to give credit.

IV

‘Dependent America’



## IV

### 'DEPENDENT AMERICA'

#### I

IF WE really want peace as much as so many say that we do, we should be willing to pull in our horns, remove all points of friction with foreign countries, either in the form of foreign trade or immigration laws, and gladly undergo a drastic cut in our standard of living. For it is well said that attempts to guarantee peace by limitation treaties, holidays, and ratios are at their best superficial and at their worst thicken the fog surrounding the peace question.

But it is not even argued that no one wishes to go this far. We are resolved to eat our pie and have it too. Because so many do not wish to face this unpleasant reality, they either attribute qualities to the peace-by-disarmament method which it is far too small a factor ever to possess or else they merely lament the fact that an international super-state has not been established. We thus seem to be intent on gaining the greatest boon



which can come to society without paying anything for it.

This is perhaps an unkind way of stating the case, for it presumes that we are able to make the material sacrifices which a thoroughgoing and consistent peace policy would entail, but that we simply do not want to — that we prefer the risk of occasional war to the daily drabness of a life bereft of many comforts. But it can also be argued that most persons have such a narrow margin between them and starvation that, if they are to keep body and soul together, they must utterly exclude any far-reaching peace preservatives and must content themselves with a short-sighted opportunism. In this view peace on the cheap is the only basis on which it can be bought and we may as well make the best of it.

The question is raised, therefore, of whether, in the long run, we could afford a policy which put peace on an equal, if not a superior, footing to profit. Could we lop off some of those outstretched arms which are actual or potential sources of friction and not only survive, but also enjoy life after the operation?

One of these arms is our string of outlying possessions which, as former President Coolidge remarked, 'with the exception of the Panama Canal Zone, are not a help to us, but a hindrance. We hold them, not as a profit, but as a duty.' Whether or not one agrees with this summation, it is undoubtedly true that the Philippines, for example, make large demands on our defense establishment and increase our war risk. We have, to be sure, discarded the responsibility of defending them to the extent of not building a navy which would make such defense possible. But we cannot so lightly discard the war risk which is implicit in having our flag flying there. Although a source of military danger, these islands have splendid economic possibilities for a nation which wishes to expand. But as these are still largely in the realm of mere possibility, a peaceful method of cutting off the islands — if such can be found — should not prove a great economic shock. Moreover, a nation which is pulling in its horns is not looking for foreign markets.

The Hawaiian Islands and Alaska, on the other hand, are not possessions, but terri-

tories, just as many of our states used to be, and the Hawaiian Islands are of economic and military value, not in the distant future, but today. We are, moreover, able to defend them. In the Caribbean area every possession, like Porto Rico or the Virgin Islands, and every sphere of influence, be it Nicaragua, Hayti, or Santo Domingo, must be seen, not only in its economic aspect (which is often of slight importance), but in its relation to that Panama Canal to which Mr. Coolidge gave such emphasis. This canal, although it is several thousand miles to the south of us, is almost an integral part of our transportation system. It has been well said that it is our southern frontier. Consequently, no events can be allowed to take place between the Rio Grande and the Canal which endanger that singularly valuable ribbon of water. Mexican oil or Cuban sugar, for instance, although they are weighty examples of our close connections in the Caribbean, do not outrank the importance of the Canal. This area, therefore, is not 'foreign' from the national defense or from the economic standpoint to the same extent as almost any other part of the world. We

are well able to defend it. Unlike the Philippines, it has become a semi-domestic area.

## II

These colonial questions are not only important themselves; they are also telling symbols of that policy of expansion which, whether we have officially admitted it or not, we have been following. Having begun with Alexander Hamilton's Report on Manufactures, it needs no extended rehearsal. We wished to become an industrial country. We became one. An industrial country, in the light of the experience of Great Britain, needs foreign markets. We set out for those markets. Such a country requires a tariff to enable her industries to grow and to maintain themselves after they have grown. We have had such tariffs for years.

We are exporting more manufactured goods than raw materials — which makes us more vulnerable than ever. There is, as Professor André Siegfried has said, a 'practical impossibility of making reprisals against raw cotton; but everyone knows that it is not so difficult to hamper the sale of automobiles.' The foreign nations had to have

cotton; they can get along without our automobiles or our motion pictures. We must, therefore, have expansion, and the margin between expansion and imperialism is sometimes very slender. Diplomatic action is always latent and therefore it is always there. In such a case, war is not often far behind.

But 'it is curious,' as Professor Siegfried has remarked, 'that this policy of economic expansion, which has brought about a whole series of tariffs, remained, in a certain way, quiescent for more than a generation. Here and there an industrial exporter appeared with foresight; but the organized forces remained entirely subject to the traditional thesis of the necessity of defending the home market. It is only since the war that the Department of Commerce, under the energetic impulse of Mr. Hoover, has taken definite action to prepare the way for the opening of foreign markets to American industry.'

Mr. Hoover's action, important as it was, was not merely the policy of a highly efficient public servant who had had some bright ideas. American industry had reached a stage where it needed the sort of service that he gave it. And it needed that service because

of the war. The years immediately preceding the war may be called normal years, in which the principal nations of the world produced enough for their home consumption and found a foreign market for their surpluses. The outbreak of the war caused the Allies and the Central Powers to abandon their farm acreage and their industrial facilities both where their own foreign trade and their domestic needs were concerned. So it was that, during the years when they were fighting and we were not, we took care of a large part of this enormous business. When we ourselves entered the conflict, we continued much of our work for the Allies, and in addition fell to developing our own huge sinews of war. In all of this 'extra' work we created facilities which, it is estimated, were quite equal to caring for about 225,000,000 people — or nearly twice our population.

Then, suddenly, these 'abnormals' stopped. A little dazed by these quick changes, the American economic giant looked around and saw that a vast amount of road-building and public and private construction of all sorts had been dammed up during the war.

He pulled the dam away, with a resulting flood of public overbuilding which in certain states had never been equalled before. This, too, came to an end. But the extra facilities which war had brought into being still remained and consumers had to be found. Moloch must be fed. Naturally he looked abroad.

He set out to finance 'backward peoples.' Wherever they were, in Europe or in the tropics, they needed many things. If you lent them the money, they would pay highly for it, and with that money they would buy the products of the great producing machine which was so much too large for us to handle alone. At least, so it seemed in those days of quick decisions and quick profits. It is now clear that we assumed a little too much, both as to other races and as to ourselves. We took it for granted that the 'backward peoples' of the world not only would be able to pay for our goods, but that they all were eager to have them. If they were not eager, so ran the theory, they could be advertised into being so. Could not the American people be advertised into doing almost anything? We forgot that the French

workingman, for example, is a creature of tradition and habit. Either we did not know — or else we overlooked — the fact that he would prefer to spend his Sunday afternoon walking along the river-bank with his children to playing a radio and driving a sedan.

We also assumed, perhaps too hastily, that the American home market was flooded. We did not believe that there were any economically 'backward people' in the United States — of whom, unfortunately, there were many then and are more today. 'Financing foreign nations,' as Mr. Paul M. Mazur has remarked, 'has been part of the scheme of things for more than a century. It is based upon the fallacious belief in the exhaustion of the home market, but it is by now surrounded with the halo of tradition and has become one of the economic *mores*. Financing individuals is, on the contrary, thought to be only a step removed from the promulgation of a dole!' Yet the pledges which individuals did give in their installment buying has since stood the test far better than the promises of many of the 'leaders.'<sup>1</sup>

One is thus led to infer that our produc-

<sup>1</sup> *New Roads to Prosperity*, by Paul M. Mazur.



tive machine had grown so great that we were in a sense hypnotized by its size and its enormous requirements — hypnotized to a point where some of us tried to make the consumer fit the producer. The seller and not the buyer had to be pleased. Naturally, when the consumer failed to fit this Procrustean bed, and the crash came, the consumer was blamed. The belief that the home market had consumed up to its maximum capacity and the idea that it had consumed extravagantly are thus traceable to the same error. 'Men,' says Mr. Mazur, 'whose economic understanding is far above the average have spoken piously of the blessings there are in having a well-chastened flock recalled to the ways of thrift and homely prudence. None the less, except for unimportant radio splurges, this was no period of spending and wasteful extravagance such as held sway during the last year of the war. The record of consumption showed, on the whole, an almost horizontal line of development, and in 1929 indicated, if anything, an infinitesimal trend downward.... There was no orgy of spending. Consumers had not overbought and were not overloaded with unnecessary

goods in the form of what is called consumer inventories, nor were they mortgaged "to the handle" by obligations assumed under the deferred plan of payment. Unbridled production roared along with apparently little concern for what was happening in the consumers' market.'

### III

The sorry story of this forgetfulness of our own people and of our attempts to finance 'backward' ones, either directly or through their governments, is well known. As the *Saturday Evening Post* said editorially of the Senate's investigation of foreign financing, 'the drumming up of business, the competition for loans, the pressure to make them, the payment, in some instances, of commissions to finders and go-betweens, the dressing up of the market, and worst of all, the eagerness to lend to already overborrowed debtors — all of these disclosures, while perhaps familiar to insiders, make excellent first-hand material for textbooks on how not to do it in the future.'<sup>1</sup> We have lost forever a great part of the fifteen billion dollars loaned abroad

<sup>1</sup> Editorial, *Saturday Evening Post*, February 27, 1932.

and, naturally, have lost the basis of credit which these fifteen billions would have provided us at home if we had had them.

Some of the money — although one cannot tell how much — may have been on the whole beneficial to us while it was stimulating trade, but some of it went into the creation of foreign industries which operate in competition with our own manufacturers. Germany's export trade, for example, with her meagre natural resources and her sixty million people, was built up by these foreign loans until it equalled the export trade of the United States, with its unequalled natural resources and one hundred and twenty million people — she the borrower and we the lender. We ourselves have reached the surprising point where we import more food-stuffs and raw materials than we export. Throughout this period there was scarcely an industry in any foreign country which did not become the beneficiary of our financial support as a result of this often unseemly scramble. For the eight years from 1920 to 1928 the United States was 'international-minded' indeed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hearings before the Committee on Finance, United

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to stress the losses which were endured by American investors in the foreign field or to emphasize the size of the sums which were thus sent to work abroad. Losses have also been endured in domestic securities and there is every reason to believe that the total of foreign investment was not an unduly large proportion of our total wealth. Moreover, so long as foreign trade is considered indispensable to our well-being, foreign financing cannot be avoided.

But one would like to know to what extent this financing had stimulated industry and employment in fields where American industry and labor could, for natural causes, never enter. It would be helpful to learn how much of this money had gone to building up foreign industries which compete with our own and how much it had gone to the development of commodities like coffee, for example, which we need but cannot produce.

States Senate, *Sale of Foreign Bonds or Securities in the United States*, p. 131, testimony of Otto H. Kahn: 'Between the year 1920 and the year 1925, what one of my predecessors on the stand here has called the international mindedness of the American public proceeded apace and it was perhaps at its apogee in 1925.'

It would then be possible to say how many of these outstretched arms could, in theory, be lopped off without utterly crippling us.

Such figures, however, are not available, and two expert statisticians, with different axes to grind, could take the figures which are at hand and produce widely differing results.<sup>1</sup> For one thing, it is admitted that the use to which our money is put by the foreign borrowers cannot be controlled and followed through to the end.<sup>2</sup> Nor, for example, is the American loan, unlike most French loans, generally made a compulsory vehicle for the purchase of American products. Finally, there is no way of telling what foreign funds

<sup>1</sup> A striking example of this is found in German and French estimates of war debt payments, contained in the following editorial excerpt from the *New York Times*, February 21, 1932: 'Figures published in Paris give the French answer to both questions. Payments from Germany are put at \$1,950,000,000 and cost of reconstruction at \$4,038,000,000. The first part of this official statement differs sharply from an estimate made recently by the German Government. It placed total reparation payments to all nations as \$12,627,000,000, of which 52 per cent, or \$6,566,000,000, has gone to France.'

<sup>2</sup> James Speyer, *Senate Hearings*, p. 640: 'We inquire what they are going to do with the proceeds of the loan that we make to them. Of course, we cannot control their budget, but frequently they tell us that they are doing public works, you know, and they are doing this and that.'

were released for unknown uses, which, without American money, might have served other purposes. One hears it said, for example, that foreign governments were enabled by American dollars to increase their armaments, in spite of the fact that no American armament loans were made. As is the case in so many great questions, the vital contentions can be neither confirmed nor denied.

But a rough conclusion about foreign financing seems possible. Where Latin American loans were concerned, for example, it was the impression of the Department of Commerce that virtually all the countries of Latin America were overborrowed. As Mr. Lawrence Dennis told the Senate Committee, 'there was never a time in history when they needed less to borrow money than in the post-war period.' Where Germany is concerned, we have the warning and the subsequent letter of so unassailable an expert as Mr. S. Parker Gilbert that she too was overborrowed.

The reason for lending to overborrowed countries seems to be that many of our bankers had to decide what they were going to do

with capital. And, as Mr. Clarence Dillon told the Senate committee, they were determined 'certainly not at the moment to further develop our own resources, now largely overdeveloped, but rather to get rid of our surplus production.' We are thus brought to the extraordinary conclusion that there was no use for our own capital at home, since we were 'largely overdeveloped,' and that there were comparatively few uses for it abroad where so many of the nations were overborrowed.

#### IV

With foreign financing so clearly undesirable and with our own productive facilities already too large, what is the proper course? Mr. Dillon, in the following exchange before the Senate committee, conveys the impression that there is none:

SENATOR GORE. And if you were offered a 5 per cent loan in this country and a 7 per cent loan abroad, you accept the lower rate of interest unless there is a surplus to respond to the 7 per cent rate?

MR. DILLON. If there is a demand for money in this country and you can get

equally good security abroad at a higher rate, why, the demand in this country would probably have to meet that rate.<sup>1</sup>

To the layman this blind obedience to the interest rate seems most discouraging. If the outside world is overborrowed, and if we do not want to increase the facilities of our own existing machinery of production, capital is left hanging between two stools. Why cannot the capital be used to develop those things which we have not got, but which we could produce? For the sake of argument, let us assume that we can produce nitrate fertilizer in this country, that we can produce it at a small profit, and that it is just as good as the nitrate which we import from Chile. Let us assume that an American wishing to start such a nitrate plant believes he can pay five

<sup>1</sup> *Senate Hearings*, p. 454. Senator Gore continued with the question: 'So it is not always a question of surplus. It is sometimes a question of the rate.'

MR. DILLON: 'No, it is a question of surplus, because this country would use its own money.'

SENATOR GORE: 'If you call any credit that goes abroad, regardless of circumstances or as to surplus, then, of course, that ends it. That is a mere matter of definition.'

MR. DILLON: 'I think it is, quite.'

(This is literally transcribed from the stenographic record. Undoubtedly Senator Gore meant to say, 'regardless of circumstances, a surplus.'))



per cent on his loan. Must the money always go to far-off Chile because the Chileans say they can pay seven per cent?

Is that problematical two per cent difference always going to control? Can no account be taken of the fact that money invested in the United States certainly means employment for American labor, that it certainly makes possible a closer supervision of the investment, and that it certainly creates a situation which we ourselves can more nearly manage?

The orthodox economist replies that this is all very well as a dream, but that it forgets the farmers who want the cheapest nitrate fertilizers, that it neglects the profit motive, and that it is 'uneconomic.' In a country where the eaters and the investors outnumber the food-growers, the harm to the farmers is one of those mishaps which are inevitable when the interests of one group run counter to those of another. Moreover, while the layman freely agrees that the profit in the case he mentions would be for the time being reduced from seven per cent to five, he does not see why, in the end, such a self-contained system would not make the United States as

a whole more profitable for all concerned — including the farmers. Assuredly, he agrees, no sane man expects anyone to invest in any business which will not yield a profit (although the American people have done nearly that thing in the case of the Farm Board), but, he asks, is a modest financial profit ‘uneconomic’? Is a big financial profit alone ‘economic’? Are there no profits other than financial? After all, he queries, what is ‘economic’?

He reads further into the testimony of Mr. Dillon. ‘If the credit were demanded ...’ says Mr. Dillon. In other words, if people wanted the money badly enough, they would get it. But they might want it very badly and be able to pay only five per cent. Under the system suggested by Mr. Dillon’s testimony they would not get it.

The American money that goes abroad, says Mr. Dillon, is ‘surplus credit’? Surplus, in his view, apparently means the money which could not fetch seven per cent. Yet the estimates of our surplus at the time of which Mr. Dillon speaks are as various as the colors of the rainbow. If people *thought* that five per cent at home were as good as seven

per cent abroad, would not five per cent become 'economic'? Does not the word 'credit,' after all, come from the Latin verb 'to think'?

The trained economist shrugs his shoulders in despair at the romantic layman. Do you not realize, he inquires, that people always have bought and always will buy that which is best at the cheapest price? Do you not realize that there is no tampering with the laws of supply and demand? The layman is ready for this attack. What will you say of the tariff? he inquires. People with a higher, or a different, standard of living and a higher, or a different, set of spiritual values, have from time immemorial used every means, economic or political, to preserve the things which they valued. The United States has had the tariff since its infancy and no trained economist would hazard the guess that it is going to be lowered. Such a contention would make the economist, and not the layman, the romantic figure in the argument.

Moreover, if those who oppose foreign financing are called romantics, cannot the same be said of those who participate in it? Not the principals, to be sure, who, as the

Senate testimony shows, had profit as their motive. But were not many of the rank and file among the purchasers of foreign securities actuated by that sentimental desire to save Europe which has occurred so often in our history?

## v

If, in pursuance of our theory, we were to perform the greatest amputation of all and cut off our foreign financing and thus cut off our foreign trade, we should have to find employment for this capital which, as Mr. Dillon's testimony indicated, is hanging between two stools — an overproduced United States on the one hand and an overborrowed world on the other. We should also have to find work for those whose produce now goes abroad. But if, having tampered with so-called 'economic law' already with tariffs and other devices, we were to tamper with it still further, we could, by not always insisting on the highest financial yield, find many uses for both the money and the labor.

For it is true that we live in what the former Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Redfield, described as a dependent America.

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It is, to be sure, not nearly as dependent on the outside world as most of its sister nations. If it were, it would be sheer ruin and starvation even to think of making it completely independent. But we are still self-sufficient for nine tenths of our needs and consume by far the greater part of what we produce. Even today, as Professor Siegfried remarked, 'exports play a relatively secondary rôle in the economic balance of the country.'

Secondary though this one tenth may be, it is, like minor physical ailments, far from secondary to those who suffer from them. The war showed how we suffered when the few things which we did not possess were denied us. One need only, in the words of the Chemical Foundation, 'refer back to Bernstorff's telegram to his home office, directing the shutting off of dyes, thus throwing four million men in America out of work; Hossenfelder's report that the cries of the hospitals here were growing ever louder and urging upon Germany to continue her policy of shutting off drugs such as salvarsan, for our ten million syphilitics, luminal for our epileptics, etc.'

In the military sense, we are probably

better off than we were. 'One after another,' says the Chemical Foundation, 'these powers of blackmail by foreign nations have been removed by the persistent development of our chemical industries, until today we can safely say that our chemists have successfully conquered fertilizers (nitrates from air, potash, and so forth), drugs (100 per cent independent) dyes (94 per cent independent), iodine, artificial silk, plastics, and now, at last, rubber, leaving only coffee and tin in the hands of any foreign nation for the exertion of pressure upon the freedom of this Congress and this people.'

But the fact that we could make rubber in this country in time of war does not mean that we are doing so. We may be better prepared if war should come,<sup>1</sup> but we are more

<sup>1</sup> The following tabulation from official naval sources shows the war-time necessities which we must still import, together with the countries of their origin:

<i>Trade Region</i>	<i>Percentage of U.S. Supply from this Region</i>	<i>Military Use</i>
ASIA, EAST INDIES		
Antimony.....	67	Munitions, bearings
Camphor.....	96	Aircraft, medicinal uses
Jute.....	86	Sandbags, food containers
Manila fiber.....	100	Cordage, rigging, ropes
Rubber.....	85	Tires, gas masks, boots, etc.
Shellac.....	86	Varnish for fuses, electrical devices
Silk.....	90	Cartridge bags, parachutes
Tin.....	66	Food containers, bearings, etc.
Manganese.....	14	Steel, chemicals, batteries

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deeply involved in foreign trade than we ever were and are thus more exposed to the frictions which cause war. This dependence on foreign trade, moreover, has reached the stage where it can make the difference between good times and bad, even though we are theoretically so nearly independent. It was this 'secondary' ten per cent, which Professor Siegfried mentioned, which seemed to start the ball rolling on its appalling downgrade when the depression began. It is, in private business, that ten per cent margin which so often writes the difference between profit and loss.

In theory, therefore, we need only be dependent on the outside world for coffee and tin, but, in practice, the sudden stoppage of foreign trade would paralyze us. Indeed, the

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<b>EUROPE</b>		
Manganese.....	30	Steel, chemicals, batteries
Nickel.....	85	Gun steel, armor plate, ammunition
Quicksilver.....	51	Fulminate, paint, batteries, medicine
Quinine.....	81	Medicinal uses
<b>CARIBBEAN</b>		
Coconut shells.....	92	Absorbent for gas masks
Sugar.....	61	Food
Sisal.....	74	Ropes
<b>EAST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA</b>		
Manganese.....	22.5	Steel, chemicals, batteries
Coffee.....	72	Food, stimulant
<b>WEST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA</b>		
Nitrates.....	40	Explosives, chemicals
Iodine.....	76	Medicinal uses

amputation which is here discussed would have to be spread over many years. Our largest imports, for example, include not only coffee and tin, but raw silk, rubber, sugar, and newsprint. These are only the top items taken from a very long list. We could not at a moment's notice produce these commodities in a quantity large enough to satisfy our own requirements. We are so dependent that it would take us several years to do so. Indeed, in the case of some commodities, such as newsprint, for example, it would take us many years to grow the timber which our paper consumption requires.

On the other hand, it is estimated that we have facilities for producing 250,000,000 more tons of coal than we can consume, one million more automobiles, and two million more barrels of oil. These are only a few of the items in which our facilities are too ample. Do not such examples suggest a giant conversion of energy and capital from these overproduced industries to those industries whose work is now so largely filled by imports from abroad?

There must, for example, be many items on the long list of imported commodities



which, with a sufficiently high tariff wall, could be produced at a modest profit. With rubber on the free list, for example, no one can tell today what could be done with domestic rubber. But the American home market is the richest in the world. With this as the private preserve of the domestic manufacturer, a large part of our present surplus could be made into an instrument of national self-sufficiency — if five per cent at home became more attractive than seven per cent in Bolivia.

Since the war we have accepted our own overproduction as an inexorable fact and so have searched the world for 'abnormals' after the great abnormal of European war had subsided. Extreme world brotherhood pacifists and patrioteering imperialists have, paradoxically enough, joined in favoring an increasingly expanding, and hence an increasingly dependent, America. Imbued with such a belief, we have done everything that we could to make it work. We have not utterly sacrificed the home market, but we have often forgotten it. Moreover, many of the articulate intelligentsia still urge reduction of the tariff and an increase in im-

ports, thus tending to intensify the dependence which was so large a factor in bringing us to the pass where we now find ourselves.

Just at present, to be sure, we seem to be headed nowhere. There is a general sense of error and a widespread determination not to make the same mistake again — at least not right away. But we are dazed. Sooner or later we will want a policy. Will we again tend toward the emphasis of the 'backward people' and the neglect of the home market, or will we, following the example of such less favorably situated countries as Germany, try to build up an independent national economy? We have, it is true, never had an economic nationalism comparable to that of the 'Buy British' campaigns, but should we not strive for a condition in which the rise of United States bonds is more gratifying to us than the easing of the foreign taxpayer's load through the application of a moratorium?

## VI

The giant conversion just discussed is not in any sense another attempt to 'solve the depression,' although it would tend, by

getting the problem within sufficiently narrow national limits, to make solution simpler. Because this discussion is more concerned with ends than with means, this proposal is a frankly Utopian one. It is based, however, on certain practical assumptions, the first of which is that the United States is intrinsically a stronger economic entity than most other nations. It is also taken for granted that no perfect tariff system will ever be devised. Indeed, the prospects for lowering the American tariff are perhaps worse than they ever were in view of the fact that more than forty countries, including Great Britain, have in the past two years, raised their duties against us — an assertion which is not weakened by the fact that in many cases we first raised our duties against them. It is also sometimes forgotten that the tariff could be a great deal higher. Under the present law about two thirds of our total imports enter free of duty, while the average rate of duty on all American imports for consumption is only about fourteen per cent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See speech of Professor Edwin W. Kemmerer to American Institute of Banking, February 27, 1932: 'About two thirds of our total imports enter free of duty, while the average rate of duty on all American imports for consump-

Another assumption is that the effect of the war debts on such a transcendental economic question as the remaking of the United States is comparatively small.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, practical men will probably agree that, although times may change, there is scant prospect at present of the war debts being paid. The question is whether or not it is good public policy to tear up the I O U's. A final assumption, which runs through this whole discussion is that no international superstate, guaranteeing world order, is either in existence or in prospect.

tion is now only about fourteen per cent. Despite the tariff, our import trade has been growing. It increased from 8.3 per cent of the world's total import trade in 1913 to 12.4 per cent in 1929, and for some years now our import trade has been the largest of any country in the world except that of Great Britain. The total interallied debt payments to us in 1929 were equal to only 4.8 per cent of our merchandise imports, or to 7.4 per cent of our non-dutiable or free imports.'

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Debts and America's Balance of Trade*, Foreign Policy Information Service, p. 271: 'As far as the collection of the war debts is concerned, these payments are so small in relation to the other items entering into our balance of international payments that their effect upon the movement of commodities is negligible.... Even the maximum receipts from the war debts, \$415,000,000, which will come due in about sixty years, would be the equivalent of only 8.6 per cent of our merchandise exports in 1926 and only 9.4 per cent of our merchandise imports in that year.'

Besides the tendency of a self-sufficient condition to keep us out of wars, it should be remembered that in world affairs the blows often fall suddenly and unpredictably, whereas, in so many purely national cases, they can be foreseen. The suddenness with which the moratorium to Germany had to be granted was quite on a par with the suddenness with which war broke out in 1914. There were, in both cases, a few insiders who had read the handwriting on the wall, but the effects of both of these developments were not confined to insiders. Such events would not only tend to be less frequent in a state where we had more control and hence more knowledge; it also seems likely that, in a country where the emphasis was not placed primarily on financial profit, more leisure and more security would be created, leading perhaps to a four-day week for labor.

Of course this would only be an advantage if the people desired security and leisure as much as material wealth. Otherwise the decrease in financial profit would lessen their happiness without any other compensation. Probably people do not yet value security and leisure as highly as purchasing power.

Perhaps, too, a new religious spirit is necessary to make them change these standards of happiness. But are there not many signs that the desire for wealth and wealth alone is not shared by many working people? If they can feel safe and if they can have some time for play, do they not feel themselves to have been sufficiently rewarded? It is said that each of us, due to the machine age, has the equivalent of sixty slaves. Do we want them all?

Clearly many of us still do. We would rather play a radio and drive a sedan than spend Sunday walking along the river-bank with our children. Nor can it be said that this love of material possessions and of mechanical slaves is merely the result of high-pressure post-war advertising. Publicity merely intensified a liking for industrial progress and for material wealth which has its roots in the frontier. It goes back to all that is most deep-seated in the American character — to that 'dynamic surge of American life' of which we have heard so much.

Indeed, one would not have the temerity even to suggest so tentatively a plan which requires such extreme changes in the Ameri-

can nature, were it not for the fact that we are now at a point where the single desire for material wealth is not being gratified. In spite of the fact that the existing system was devised with this sole aim in view, we are not surging dynamically any more. Perhaps we are growing older. If one concludes — perhaps regretfully — that our ‘manifest destiny’ is a thing of the past, one is justified in hoping that it will die as gracefully as possible and be replaced by a view of life which, while it is very different, has its compensations and its charms. The alternative would appear to be to keep the ‘dynamic surge’ alive with governmental injections and to continue the uneven and perhaps hopeless struggle with overproduction by looking around for our lost and war-born ‘abnormals’ which, perhaps, only another war could create.

The ideal of a self-sufficient country not only does violence to the belief in the value of material gain. It will be said that it is in the spirit of the static society which is depicted in the Republic of Plato or the Utopia of Sir Thomas More and that it thus runs counter to the even more fundamental

belief in equality of opportunity. The reason that the French workingman walks along the river with his children, so the critic will remark, is because he knows and has known for generations that he lives in a static society and can therefore rise no higher. The knowledge of the possibility of rising, he will say, and say truly, is a large element in our happiness. A self-sufficient country would tend to create a caste system, which, of course, is utterly at variance with everything for which Americans have sacrificed themselves.

A caste system would, indeed, be abhorrent. But the critics might do well to ask themselves whether a caste system is not already being created and whether a self-contained community, at its worst, would not substitute a better one. If we are to be poor, let us be not only poorer, but happier. Nor does there seem to be any obvious reason why, with all of our resources and our comparatively sparse population, there would not, ideally speaking, be more wealth to go around than there is today when we have only skimmed the cream. The reason why the American workman would not have the feeling of hopelessness of his European



brother would be because he lived in a country where Nature had placed more things with which to make life pleasant.<sup>1</sup>

The putting into effect of an economically independent state and its subsequent maintenance would, in the present popular temper, require a powerful set of economic commissars. But this reprehensible prospect does not require consideration, since only a new mental attitude toward life would make such a state an even conceivable goal. Such an attitude would not only have to take root among the rank and file. It would also have to obtain among the business leaders. In his testimony before the Senate Finance Committee Mr. Thomas W. Lamont said that he and his fellow international bankers were only merchants, that they merely took foreign securities, as another merchant might take a shipment of underwear, and passed

<sup>1</sup> Fifteenth Annual Report of the President of the National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., by Magnus W. Alexander, 1931: 'It would be a fatal mistake for us to assume, as some pessimists would have us do, that the expansion of our domestic market has reached the point of saturation. That assumption implies the belief that science and invention have already rendered their maximum contribution to industrial progress and that further and greater aid is not to be expected.'

them on at a profit to the retailer. Those who know Mr. Lamont, and the many statesmanlike considerations which govern his conduct, realize that he was speaking with undue modesty. His remark, however, raises the question of whether there could not be more statesmanship in business. We have been deafened with the demand for a business-like government, a demand which was granted to a point where almost all great political principles have yielded to the statistician's graph. Would not a little of the other thing be salutary?

Clearly the creation of a truly independent America entails not only problems of accounting; it also requires a changed human nature. Good business, as distinct from peace preservation, may require a continuation of the policy of trying to maintain the home market at the same time as we try to expand our foreign trade — for the theory which is here described considers peace first and business second. But visionary though this theory may be, it is no more so than the ideal of world free trade to which so many economists and theorists have given unsparingly of time and strength. Though both ideals are

remote, we seem to be measurably nearer independence than its opposite. We are still sufficient for nine tenths of our needs; we are, with the rest of the world, bound hand and foot to the protective tariff; some export industries are already nearly eliminated; and every post-war development puts free trade farther away than ever. If a shift in Utopias is to be made, does not self-sufficiency disclose an avenue which should at least be explored?

This flight through the realm of economic fancy was not, however, made for the purpose of finding the golden fleece of stable wealth, but in order to ensnare the equally elusive dove of peace. In this spirit — and only in this spirit — we have canvassed the question of cutting off the great outstretched arm of foreign trade, mindful of the fact that our greatest war risk — and our greatest risk of defeat in case of war — lies not on our own continent, but in our struggle for foreign markets. Can we afford to make such a sacrifice? Or are we condemned to seeking peace on the cheap because we cannot afford to pay the price of far-reaching measures? The fruition of such a plan would require so

many drastic changes in human nature that it will for this reason alone be rejected out of hand. But such changes are also required if you would eliminate war.



V

## The Cult of Weakness



## V

### THE CULT OF WEAKNESS

#### I

WHEN seen with other national problems as a background, the peace question emerges as but one of a set of other policies which are not only weak and inconclusive in themselves, but which seem instinctively to favor the feeblest and least desirable elements in society. It would be idle to maintain, for example, that prohibition is but one aspect of a reasonable state paternalism, for prohibition is not geared to the needs of the self-reliant common man, but to the drunkard. Nor is our genial treatment of criminals to the advantage of the sturdy members of the community. Indeed, these things must be interpreted as evidences of an emphasis which has been placed and a care which has been lavished on the worst people in our midst, regardless of the interests of the best.

Looming a little further in the background is the bureaucracy, federal, state, and local, which spends as a whole about one quarter of our national income, and of which the



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federal portion alone has increased five-fold since 1916 — increased to a point where, at the close of the last fiscal year, it had a larger deficit in proportion to its income than was true of any other government in the world. Such a diversion of our income to governmental uses tends inevitably to increase the expenses of production, to lower the general living standards, and to stifle the spirit of private initiative. It, too, is a powerful, if unseen, source of weakness.

The security with which the federal bureaucracy, for example, is entrenched is shown by the fact that nearly half of its costs are in items which must remain fixed if the government is to survive and discharge its constitutional functions. The astounding degree to which it has increased is revealed in such items as the expenditures for agriculture, which since 1913 have multiplied themselves more than thirteen times, where the national defense, for example, has been multiplied by three. The actual impossibility of reducing items which are theoretically reducible is made evident by such an example as veterans' relief, which is the largest single item in the budget.

Moreover, the activities of the Federal Government are so inextricably intertwined that only volumes of complicated analysis would separate the wheat from the chaff. So it is that one cannot 'slash' the bulk of federal expenses, any more than a sharp blade can slash a heap of cement which has been given time to set. A pickaxe and a good deal of blasting are necessary. Every project has its strong and active friends, who are always more powerful than any vague popular feeling that 'government is too expensive' — even if such a feeling is held by the majority. Moreover, if the majority shows signs of activity, many appeals can be made to its reason or to its emotions. If the sums expended on public works were to be cut out, for example, one can imagine the very real appeal which would be heard on behalf of workers on roads and buildings who would thus be thrown out of employment. Nor would friends of the automobile industry be slow in saying that more roads meant more automobiles and more automobiles meant more employment.

It is hard to make a general condition, however serious, seem as real as a specific in-

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stance of need. The question, moreover, is one of degree rather than of principle, since it is not denied that government, in essence, means protection. For this reason a public temper must develop which is so angry that it will not draw careful lines, but will blast great mounds of government away, carrying some good along with the bad. Until the general condition seems real and until such a temper arises, the bureaucracy, with minor changes here and there, will go on holding its own.

Those who desire primarily the encouragement of self-reliance will hope that this temper will arise, in spite of much that is good in the Federal Government. The Department of Commerce, for example, is very nearly a model of what a government department should be. But can it be doubted that private business could conduct similar economic researches if it really felt the need, or that it should pay the costs of such services even if conducted by the government? Less deserving of praise are the Farm Board, for example, and the government-owned system of inland waterways which operate often in direct competition with the railroads. But are not

all such activities, whether immediately helpful or not, causes of weakness in greater or lesser degree?

Do they not also spring from elements of weakness within the country? When the Secretary of Agriculture was reproached, for example, because his department spent the public funds in circulating thousands of copies of a pamphlet entitled 'Lamb As You Like It,' his retort was twofold: that this pamphlet was helpful to the producers of lamb and that the people who received the pamphlet wanted it. The question of why the government of a country with a well-developed publishing industry should engage in literary efforts of its own, and the further question of why such a government should give special aid to one of many interests represented in the food-producing business, may be passed over. More pertinent is the defense that 'the people want it.' This is the argument made for every extra-federal expenditure of funds, from pamphlets to road-building. Is it not more correct to say that a noisy portion of the people wished to obtain this service at the expense of the quiet, uncomplaining, and perhaps ignorant majority? And is it not

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also true that many of us, while opposing bureaucracy in general, have favored it in particular cases? For it is not maintained that we could easily spare many of the jobs which Uncle Sam does for us. Many of them, like the issuance of marine charts, for example, are an absolute necessity. But is it not reasonable to say that those who use the charts should go further toward paying their cost instead of paying only the nominal sum which is all that is usually demanded for government publications?

Like the tariff, or almost any other national issue, there is no practical difference of principle between either of the great parties where such sources of national weakness are concerned. With certain exceptions, both parties have sponsored them. It would, therefore, seem natural to look to the radical elements for a program which did not interest itself so largely in the cries of mediocre minorities, but was instead devoted to the long-suffering many. For we have a radical element, calling itself 'liberal,' represented in private life by Professor John Dewey and publications of the *Nation* type and having for its public spokesmen such Senate insurgents

as Senator Norris. Here, one would think, would be a refuge from the major parties.

But far from being a new white hope of self-reliance, it is merely a more extreme version of the same dominant psychology. These are the people who work themselves into an intellectual lather over the trial of criminals, thereby stressing another type of misfit. They may or may not be right on the merits of the cases they discuss, but it seems at least doubtful whether persons primarily interested in keeping open the avenues of opportunity to the common man would devote so much of their energy to so many questions of this character. The colleagues of these 'liberals' in the Senate go even further than the dominant parties in favoring enlargement of the bureaucracy, at the same time resisting attempts to balance the budget. If they had their way, electricity, water power, and conditions of labor, for example, would become children of the federal city. The extension of the governmental power, as has often been said, is the death process to freedom. Yet these persons call themselves liberals the while they try to strangle liberty.

## II

The fact that those who are strong have been either silent or sleeping has given the minorities a degree of power which they were never, under our theory of government, intended to have. This is as true of elections, where only a portion of the people vote, as it is of the minority lobbies in Washington.<sup>1</sup> It is no wonder that such a system, carefully fostered by the direct primary, tends to breed weak public men, in spite of the few and fortunate exceptions. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler's phrase — 'midgets in the seats of the mighty' — although directed to individuals, applies also to the midget minorities which had sufficient influence to raise such individuals to power.

Indeed, the existence of this minority influence, holding its power by default, accounts perhaps for the lack of any vigorous and widely held body of party tradition. In-

<sup>1</sup> According to the Census Bureau the number of persons of voting age in the United States on April 1, 1930, was 72,943,624. The popular vote in the presidential election of 1928, the largest ever cast in this country, was 36,724,823. (Washington dispatch to *Boston Evening Transcript*, September 23, 1931.)

stead of feeling the wholesome pressure of well-known party principles, we all too often find a party doctrine consisting merely in what a given official has said or done. The question of whether or not you are a Republican or a Democrat does not, therefore, depend on the extent of your knowledge and belief in Republican or Democratic principles. You may adhere to the Republican platform, but if the highest Republican official violates it, you must agree with him if you wish to remain within party ranks.

No matter how able the leader of the party may be, it seems a source of weakness to have a great political party turned into a mere personal perquisite. Moreover, this is nowhere more deplored than among certain leaders themselves, who realize that their own talents are insufficient to carry on the great task of government in a land where public participation is the very life-blood of the system. Failing such participation, we cannot be surprised at the notorious breakdown in party discipline.

The disadvantages of having weak men in big positions are too obvious to require explanation, but it is perhaps not generally



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realized that an oblique method of government is thereby encouraged. The man who is nurtured in the 'ear to the ground' school of politics comes to believe that he has become little more than a device for the reception of outside impulses. His natural inclination, therefore, if he wishes to taste the joys of independent action, is to try either to control or to stop those impulses, for he knows that, whenever the public is either informed or aroused on a particular issue, he has little left to do except to follow. This leads to the rather novel method of government by blanketing the facts. Either they are withheld altogether or they are overlaid with a mass of irrelevancies and are thus presented in such a way as to bore and confuse the reader.

The Wickersham Report, for example, which, as is now well known, was a wet report, was awaited with great eagerness. It bade fair to crystallize opinion on the prohibition question as no other single state paper had done before, and to this extent, of course, it would have disturbed the political *status quo*. Although it was much longer than the usual news release, the long-standing

practice of issuing Executive Office publications to the press many days in advance of their public appearance was, perhaps inadvertently, abandoned. Instead, the report was rushed out to the newspapers at virtually a moment's notice. The time which would ordinarily have been available for analyzing the report, for writing truthful headlines, and for composing an accurate summary was denied the newspapers. They were, therefore, required to use the official summary, which, as is now well known, was utterly misleading. If they had not been stampeded, they would have given the official summary the curt notice it deserved.

On the heels of this haste and this official summary came the President's own opinion, which, by taking a large part of a sorely tried front page, definitely prevented widespread and deliberate consideration of the report. It was, therefore, small wonder that some of the members of the Wickersham Commission resented this rather cavalier treatment of their long labors. Nor is it less surprising to find, in the files of the newspapers of that date, a series of headlines, some of which said the report was dry, others carrying the news

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that it was wet. The full text of the report became available to students, but the vast majority do not study these things. With them the first impression counts for most, and the first impression had been befogged.

The London Naval Conference, on the other hand, is an example of producing in the public mind a condition of sheer boredom and indifference. In common with most public questions, that of armaments is intrinsically full of interest and the general principles are perfectly simple to grasp. Yet, in spite of the fact that the coöperation of the press was personally solicited, the announcements from the American delegation were so dull and confused that, after the conference had been in session for a few weeks, public interest in it had lapsed to a low point. The treaty which was there achieved was an accomplishment which in many ways reflected great credit on those who negotiated it. But official announcements had been so turgid and inadequate and public participation in this great piece of public business had been so effectively discouraged that the negotiators were denied a glory which they in a measure deserved.

Regardless of one's opinion about either the Wickersham Report or the London treaty, it is plain that we are facing a weapon of great power and unknown possibilities. The blanketing of facts, either in the ways just cited or by the simple and recently used device of suppressing the time-honored press conferences with important officials, is certainly not in the spirit of the free press tradition and cannot be replaced by elaborate government statistical services. To be sure, the newspaper has not been censored at its place of publication; it is instead handicapped at the sources of the news. With increasing use, this weapon will deprive public opinion of the very bread and bone on which it must feed. The voter understands that, if he disapproves of a certain man, he can vote against him. But you cannot know, and hence cannot vote against, the things which you are not told. So it is that sitting on the safety valve may some day produce terrible results. It was not for nothing that Mr. Coolidge remarked that 'all public business ought to be publicly conducted.'

Another result of having 'midgets in the seats of the mighty' has been the emergence

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of a sort of political vandalism. Because some officials are ignorant of political principles and seem incapable of entertaining general ideas, they succumb to the ever-present temptation of yielding to momentary expediency. If the Monroe Doctrine does not appear to coincide with the trade interests of a particular year, let us forget its past services and ignore that longer view which makes its wisdom so apparent. If the Senate interferes with the rapid passage of a particular measure, let us continue the process of increasing the executive power regardless of the protection which the Senate has given and will give against executive oppression.

There is, indeed, something rather pathetic about those men, either in public or private life, who think that public questions, full of imponderables as they are, can yield to the blueprint and the graph. Like children who, by dint of strenuous stretching, can reach the piano's keys, they can strike an occasional note, but can never play the tune.

### III

The imperfections of our public men, which have been partly responsible for some

of these unpleasant tendencies, have, of course, given rise to a long and noisy dissatisfaction which has taken a rather curious form. In the pioneer days, so Mr. James Truslow Adams tells us, a mentality was developed which preferred to move on rather than stay in one place and sit face to face with a difficult problem until it was solved. Indeed, this tendency has already been noted as a factor in the growth of bureaucracy, for did we not there move many of our problems 'on' to the Federal Government instead of wrestling with them ourselves? So it is that some critics of government, tired of mediocre professional politicians, looked with secret favor on a dictatorship and a better, if not a larger, bureaucracy, or spoke openly of business men in government. Apparently lawyers, bankers, and engineers could not become doctors or baseball players overnight, but they could become statesmen. Yet must we not admit the unpalatable truth that much of the furtiveness in government and much of the worship of expediency is due to these doubtless able men of no experience whom we have thrust into politics? And did we not thrust them

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there largely because we wanted to 'move on,' because we did not have the patience to grapple with the really fundamental problem of creating a set of professional politicians of the highest quality?

Clearly able professionals are what the situation demands. No branch of private activity or of appointive office gives a man a training for public life which can equal politics itself. Political journalism, which undertakes to know the public temper, is perhaps the closest approximation to politics. The journalist, however, does not have to face the voter on a given day, but only a circulation list which may dislike his views, but laughs at his paper's comics and finds its financial columns indispensable. Indeed, is there any occupation which makes demands on a man similar to those of politics? The politician must not only know the people; he must periodically bare his soul to them. He has to do what no man enjoys doing and which most men in private life must only do very seldom — commit himself in public. As state legislator or congressman or governor, he must vote 'yes' or 'no' and veto or approve. So it is that every decision is pre-

ceded by the deepest thought of which the man is capable for the simple and binding reason that these decisions affect his own personal career. To be sure, his thought may be influenced by mere personal advantage, but he cannot afford to ignore the real merits and demerits of the measure confronting him. In the immortal Tammany phrase he must 'pander to the better element' as well.

Even this rigid training cannot make an able legislator out of a mediocre man, but in a man of ability it tends to produce a set of convictions which are certainly well-considered in comparison with the opinions which are induced in the rank and file by a hasty breakfast reading of the news. Moreover, a lifetime of this public commitment not only develops convictions; it also breeds a healthy skepticism of miracle-working devices. It should, in a man of proper type, give rise to a habit of public courage.

On the other hand, the highly placed official who has had no practical political experience faces a set of problems and of values which are new. If most of us were in a similar situation, we should also tend to that faith



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in mere devices which would surely disappoint us. We should also be forced to improvise a set of opinions to do duty for the convictions which our career in private life, as engineers, lawyers, or business men, had naturally not developed. Lacking conviction, we should also lack that strong and determined faith which can only accomplish results in politics. And when we did, somewhat diffidently, sponsor a given program, we would be reluctant to discuss it with men of experience for fear that we should soon find ourselves in a position where we should not know what to say. Finally, being human, we too should deplore the widespread lack of respect for American traditions in spite of the fact that we ourselves knew so little about them that we had been unable to make them vivid to the people. Perhaps some day, when our nostrums had failed and our improvised opinions had collapsed, we should realize that we, and the country which looked to us for guidance, would have avoided many troubles, if we had been as experienced in the imponderables of politics as we had previously been expert in the practicalities of business. To use a symbol, we should then

remember that the flat classicism of a city like Washington is as typical of our political ideals as the staccato verticality of New York is characteristic of our business.

The last — and most obvious — of our national weak spots transcends the limited field of pure politics. The distribution of the profits of industry is on the mind of everyone who thinks about depression, and the realization is growing that, unless enough wealth is set aside to provide security for the laboring man, a rude division will be made by government, perhaps by doles and certainly by taxation. Whether or not it is economically possible to divide wealth at its source between the investors, the managers, and the laborers in such a way as to furnish security is open to question. But the political consequences of not doing so are perfectly plain.

This problem may well be linked with the fact that for the first time in our history the number of persons leaving the United States has exceeded the number coming in. The significance of this event becomes compelling when it is realized that just as early Americans received opportunities from the unoccupied land, so were their living standards

raised by the constant inflow of foreign laborers. The Irish wave, let us say, pushed up the level of the Americans already here. The Italian immigration enabled the descendants of these Irish to fare far better than their ancestors had done. Each succeeding wave pushed all the others up. With unlimited land and with unlimited ignorant labor to do the dirty work, the task of providing good times for those who were already here was not insuperable. Nor is it any disparagement of our ability that these 'extras' — these windfalls in men and things — always made our problems so much easier.

For many generations, therefore, we have actually had a proletariat. The distasteful word did not disturb us, because it did not seem to apply to Americans, but only to an alien group, still too ignorant and too helpless to make its wants known. Today the dirty work must still be done — and it must be done by Americans, whose training and inheritance forbids them from accepting terms such as the foreigners gladly endured.

### IV

In this rough enumeration, prohibition has not been mentioned from the standpoint of temperance, criminal trials have not been cited in the interests of individual justice, the bureaucracy has not been viewed with its direct beneficiaries in mind, and the distribution of wealth has not been discussed with a view to profit. These things have been set down solely to show the extent to which violence is being done to the American dream.<sup>1</sup> Walt Whitman sang — and we still sing with him — that ‘the justification and main purpose of these United States’ are ‘plowing up in earnest the interminable average fallows of humanity.’ The writer of the Declaration of Independence gave high place to the value of the ‘common man.’ ‘Democracy,’ says President Lowell, ‘in its social aspect means equality of opportunity, which was expressed by Napoleon in the phrase “la carrière ouverte aux talents,” and by Pasteur, in a loftier vein, when he said that it enabled every man to put forth his utmost effort.’

<sup>1</sup> For this inspiring phrase the author is again indebted to *The Epic of America*, by James Truslow Adams.

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When Whitman sang of the 'average fellow' and Jefferson spoke of the 'common man,' it is clear that neither of them had in mind a condition which emphasized the sub-average and the uncommon, either high or low. If Pasteur's phrase implies anything, it shows that a man to deserve democracy must be capable of making an effort. If the career, in Napoleon's words, is to be kept open, it must be kept open for those who have talents. The American dream, therefore, presupposes citizens who are not so feeble that they cannot be told the truth, who are not sub-average drunkards or uncommon criminals, and who are not intended to be transformed into proletarians or bureaucratic rats. It is, in brief, a self-reliant vision.

The American dream, it will be said, is but a dream, which has had to suffer many rude shocks in the past. This is true, but when has it been done greater violence? And when has hope for it seemed so dim? No party exists which really battles for its preservation. No practical men have yet devised a method for keeping it alive. Instead, we watch the development of a set of misfits — in a land where the political system is in its turn based

on a social system of equal opportunity. Those who have not forgotten what the American dream is tend to assume that it has become a hopeless fantasy and look with favor on European systems which chain the individual to the wheel of state.

Perhaps, in assuming that the possibilities of American individualism are dead and in 'moving on' to an alien system of state dependence, we are again assuming too much and moving too fast. The fault may lie, not in the dream itself, but in our own values of life. We may have reached the stage where we can question the dictum of Mr. Henry Ford that 'we now know that anything which is economically right is also morally right' — if, indeed, we do not invert the motto. The virtue of limitless material ambition, sound as it may have been in frontier days, had, as Mr. Adams has pointed out, become the ugly vice of greed when Presidents Roosevelt and Wilson sought to inspire a sort of moral revaluation to conform to the needs of a more stable society. The great calamity of the war, in Mr. Adams's view, was that it ended this process, made Europe our next frontier, and continued the pioneer virtues in a coun-

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try no longer limitless enough to support them. Small wonder that the quest for mere material expediency under such unfavorable conditions should have resulted in a shaken faith and in a sense of futility.

But is it not conceivable that resurrection of the American dream will nourish faith and hope where the bookkeeping approach has so utterly failed? We yet have the natural riches, the intelligence, and the spark of an ideal which still abides. But the task of keeping government within bounds so that the self-reliant average masses may prosper can only be entrusted to men who are not only strong themselves, but are determined to keep government weak. The American dream, moreover, cannot be achieved by political parties unaided. The will to do so exists already, but the reduction of bureaucracy and the removal of the emphasis from the minorities are political impossibilities unless the citizenry is thoroughly aroused. This may occur of itself or it may require a man so strong in mind that he can vitalize our early principles, and so strong in character that he will not wish to extend his own authority. He would have to know his own

mind without waiting for that complete knowledge of the facts. Such a strapping leader would strike a Spartan note and the American dream would be on its way to salvation.

### v

Without such a man or such a change, we may, indeed, ask ourselves whether we have created a governmental and industrial Titan which has taken charge of us forever. We may wonder still further whether we are not standing face to face with a veritable cult of weakness in matters of public concern which has us permanently in its grip — a cult which is all the more dangerous because it is not conscious. Rather does it spring from a frittering away of energies by persons who have come to take the American dream for granted. An agitation is thus made in behalf of a certain bureaucratic remedy or for the sake of a certain criminal, and Whitman's 'main purpose' suffers. For this 'purpose' is a difficult and unprecedented one in human affairs which admits of no neglect. In foreign problems we have perhaps gone even further in pursuit of special objectives to the neglect



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of the general aim. Learned men, devoted to a certain form of so-called 'peace machinery,' will, for example, favor an exceedingly hazardous boycott of Japan, forgetting that the 'main purpose' is preserving the American dream, not only from internal sappings, but from the wars of the outside world.

We have always been able to afford these interesting 'fishing expeditions' because we could, for periods of time, forget the dream. We were the beneficiaries of gifts of God in the form of a high degree of remoteness and self-sufficiency which made the quest for peace simpler than it is today — although, even with those advantages, we never succeeded in keeping at peace for much longer than a generation at a time. We also were mightily aided in preserving our social and political order by the gifts which Nature gave us in new men and new lands. We now seem to be thrown on our own resources, to grapple with the most difficult peace problem in our history and with economic and political conditions which, while containing marvellous elements of strength, are unrelieved by wind-falls.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Adams, *The Epic of America*, p. 306.

'Whenever the quarrels of self-centered groups,' Mr. Lippmann has remarked, 'become unbearable, reformers in the past found themselves forced to choose between two great alternatives. They could either take the path to Rome and impose a Roman peace upon the warring tribes. Or they could take the path to isolation, autonomy, and self-sufficiency.' These lines were written with special reference to our failure to impose our Roman peace at Versailles. But they remind us that in the larger sense we have taken neither path. We stand instead in the middle of the roadstead, exposed to every wind that blows.

The peace fight is but one pronounced example among many of weak half measures which spring — and must always spring — from a lack of a universally recognized Utopia. Even those distant, transcendental objectives which may never be attained show that emotionally and idealistically we are not at one with each other. Because one's idea of Utopia is as independent of reason as one's religion, this is a condition which cannot be argued. The picture of a whole world permanently at peace, all the races of which

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enjoy an identical standard of living, is assuredly majestic, but so too is the Washingtonian concept of an America at peace, rising pure and serene out of the stormy waters which surround it and enjoying its own prosperity and its own democracy — twin blessings which, in spite of assiduous business effort and a 'war for democracy,' it has been unable to vouchsafe to others. The likelihood that the purely American ideal is measurably closer at hand carries little weight with the world Utopians. For they claim for their ideal that it is in harmony with the American pioneering spirit, since it attempts great things which have never been done before.

But in harmony, too, is the ideal of 'America first.' The task of keeping the United States at peace is sufficiently large; and self-understanding and self-mastery are sufficiently stirring challenges to our idealism. Not only are they difficult, but, if achieved, they would be quite as unprecedented as the dream of jamming the crazy-quilt of Europe into a prophylactic pattern. For even at the very beginning of our history hardly a half of the people, according to the highest reckon-

ing, were actively in favor of independence. The exploitation of our own frontier and our sudden immersion into the European cauldron have constantly shifted our economic loyalties to a point where we literally have not had time to follow the advice of George Washington 'to establish a national character.' Because we have yet to emerge as a complete nation in the spiritual sense, we are certainly justified in exclaiming: Before we embrace a new Utopia, let us achieve our own!

Three times in our history — and each time after a major war — men have arisen who rededicated America to its own ideals. The Revolution produced George Washington and the Civil War brought those chiselled words of rededication in the Gettysburg Address. The World War did not find a man at the head of the state who saw it as his duty to reconsecrate America to itself — and so the mantle slipped onto another's shoulders. The present prospects for the 'common man' and for those self-reliant 'average fellows' impel the hope that this rededication will be taken in hand, for without it the American dream may indeed fade away. They also call for an imperative reminder

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that there is a grim parallel between the dream and the quest for peace, for if we allow the dream to fade, America, as we have learned to know and love it, may be gone. Then peace would not be worth preserving and America would not be worth fighting for.

THE END

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